SPIRITISM

FACTS and FRAUDS

Simon A. Blackmore, S.J.

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By SIMON A. BLACKMORE, S.J.

8vo. Cloth.

TEN years ago it was sufficient to smile indulgently at the mention of Spiritism. Mediums were regarded as cleverer, perhaps, and higher-priced, but not essentially different from the gypsy fortune-teller.

The remarkable revival Spiritism has lately enjoyed is one of the most interesting by-products of the War. Its promised balm to hearts torn by bereavement has attracted thousands of converts. When scientists like Sir Oliver Lodge and Camille Flammarion become fiery advocates of this "New Revelation," the indulgent smile is an inadequate retort.

This book explores the recent history and remote origins of Spiritism. Telepathy, rapping, automatic writing, ouija boards, spirit photographs, ectoplasm and materialization in every form are described and analyzed. The Fox sisters, Lincoln, Houdini, Maeterlinck, "Katie King," Palladino, and scores of other famous names figure in incidents delightfully recounted. The author answers the claims of the Spiritists and gives a complete explanation of the Church's position, stating it with incontrovertible logic.

Bishop Schrembs of Cleveland finds it "the most satisfactory publication on the subject."

SPIRITISM
FACTS AND FRAUDS

BOOKS BY
THE SAME AUTHOR

A Great Soul in Conflict:
A Study of Macbeth

The Riddles of Hamlet and
the Newest Answers

SPIRITISM
FACTS AND FRAUDS

BY

SIMON AUGUSTINE BLACKMORE, S.J.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE RIGHT REV. JOSEPH SCHREMBS, D.D.
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INTRODUCTION

"SPIRITISM, FACTS AND FRAUDS" makes a very opportune appearance. The present disturbances prevalent in our civic and social life and the consequent mental unrest of the masses in regard to religious and moral questions, has opened wide the door to Occultism, and especially to its more popular form, Spiritism.

No matter what a man's religion is, he is ever face to face with the perplexing and awe-inspiring question of life after death—of life in that unknown spirit-world whither he may be summoned at any moment. It is a question which a man can no more shirk than the fact of his own physical existence. If he seek to escape it by mental distractions or self-engrossment in material things of earth, it ever returns the stronger to plague him, and, like an intangible ghost to haunt him in his moments of reflection. Under such mental stress, many who are ignorant of the primal truths of Divine Revelation or wholly disregard them, are, in the solution of the harassing problem, thrown back upon their own finite powers, and, groping helplessly in darkness, turn in eagerness to Spiritism with its loudly advertised claims and promises.

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To the true Christian, however, the urgent question rouses no uneasiness or bewilderment. Firm in his faith divine, his mind is illumined by the supernal revelations offered him by his loving Father, and, in that heavenly light, his eye of faith penetrates the wall of mystery, and perceives the solution of the perplexing uncertainties concerning his dear departed loved ones. They are with God, and that suffices. Of their existence in the spirit-world, their state and new mode of life, the God of infinite truth and love has Himself assured him; and, in consequence, he feels no hunger after farther knowledge of that invisible realm—a knowledge which, he knows, is by Divine Ordination unattainable in mortal life.

Some writers on Spiritism have strictly confined themselves to its frauds, and others to its realities; but the author, from a lofty summit, as it were, scans in unobstructed view the entire field of the new cult, giving a clear and comprehensive account of its origin, development, practises, alleged phenomena, and of its claim, as a new revelation, to supplant the Christian religion. In this exposition, he summons to his aid the most eminent spiritistic authorities, subjecting their testimony to a keen analysis, and their phenomena and assumptions to a searching criticism. In all this he is most comprehensive, sound, and thoroughly orthodox.

The author, moreover, proves that some of the phenomena at least are preternatural beyond all

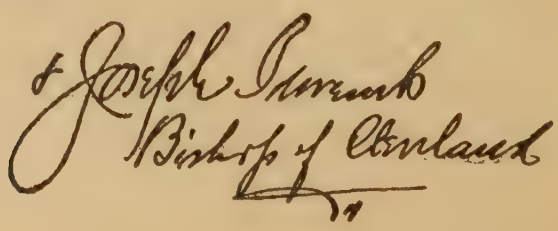
question. As regards the frauds of Spiritism, he distinguishes between those that are deliberately perpetrated by the medium, and those inspired by spirits of evil, whose purpose is to remove all suspicion of their personal identity from the minds of the unwary, with the further purpose of making their dupes the objects of ridicule before their fellow-men.

Of great importance are the chapters which furnish proofs, that the communicating spirits can be neither souls departed, no matter what their state in the world beyond, nor angels of God, nor His saints, and must therefore be the sole remaining class of spirits—fallen angels, or masquerading demons bent on man's moral ruin. These spirits, the author shows, tell us nothing of God, deny the Divinity of Christ, exclude all thoughts of the supernatural, ridicule the notion of eternal punishment, and picture heaven as a shadow-land not worth the while. He, furthermore, exposes the mercenary spirit of mediums, the sinful curiosity of sitters, the physical evils consequent upon spiritistic practises, and the gross immorality resulting therefrom in many cases. In fine, he proves from reason, from supernatural revelation, from the teaching of the Fathers and eminent theologians, the divine wisdom of the Church in prohibiting her children from having aught to do with Spiritism in any manner whatsoever.

The present book will be a pleasing boon to every

Christian. Its perusal will show forth the many inestimable blessings of his divine faith, not the least of which is the infallible safeguard against the many pitfalls that beset him in associations with men of all creeds or of none. But still greater is the boon to non-Christian men of good will, who, without the light of divine faith, are left to their own fallible judgments. Its perusal will make clear to them the empty claims of Spiritism and the evils consequent upon its practises, and such knowledge will turn them from the broad road that leads to destruction.

The work in all, though logical in treatment and in many parts scientific, is without dryness. As a convincing treatise on Spiritism in all its aspects, it is also a storehouse of the doctrines of the Church in regard to it. Every Christian will find the book, with its diversified information, of more than ordinary interest, and non-Christians will also find in it much illumination concerning angels, good or bad, and the mode of life, conditions, and activities of souls departed. In a word, we find *Spiritism, Facts and Frauds* the most satisfactory publication on the subject, and deem it worthy of the serious study of everyone interested in the problems of the modern spiritistic cult.



PREFACE

THE new form of occultism, known as Spiritism, usually attracts the attention of the masses through isolated manifestations which, blazoned in the sensational press, tend to revive the oft-repeated question concerning the reality of spiritistic phenomena. Comparatively few, however, even of the devotees of the cult, have been led to consider the spiritistic system as a whole, and its claim to be a "New Revelation," or religion destined to supplant, as they say, the time-worn and effete Christian religion.

Spiritism viewed as a religion, is more radically antichristian than any other "ism" born during the nineteen centuries of the Christian era, and, as a consequence, must be obnoxious and repellent to every Christian. If it attracts any, it is only those who, in ignorance of its fundamental but impossible claims, yield to curiosity in regard to its much-vaunted phenomena. Under this aspect alone, has Spiritism effectively appealed to ill-informed Christians. This fact impelled the late Holy Father, as we read in the *Month*, January, 1923, to request the General of the Society of Jesus to urge the writers and preachers of his Order to deal with the subject of Spiritism, so as to arouse the minds and consciences

of the faithful to the strict obligation of shunning the lures of the spreading "ism."

Christians of our day are in a somewhat similar position to that of the chosen people among the Egyptians. They live and move amid a multitude whose religion is practically a gross materialism, which is always partial to occult practises. Of necessity they must often meet with many who believe in Spiritism, practise it, consult mediums, and keep abreast with its current literature. To tell them that Spiritism is all *diablerie* or all fraudulence is only to invite their pity or contempt. It is, therefore, incumbent upon every Christian to meet the circumstances in which his associations place him, to learn something of Spiritism, something of its nature, claims, practises, and religion, in order to converse intelligently with his fellow-men, and to maintain his own orthodox views on a subject that is often unavoidable. For such Christians the present book is primarily intended.

In our exposition of Spiritism, it was deemed proper, on the one hand, to touch upon its origin and revival, its mediums and phenomena, both spurious and genuine, the theories of causation, including telepathy and the subconscious mind, and the identification of the invisible agencies. In all these we have relied upon the testimony of the most eminent spiritists. On the other hand, intent upon showing that the claims of Spiritism are unverified; that its invisible agents are not the souls of the dead, but

spirits of evil; and that the "New Revelation" is a spurious religion, we have again invoked the weight of ample experience and of recognized authority.

The solution of these problems necessarily led us to consider the state of the soul after death, the mode and nature of its activities, its knowledge of earthly affairs, and whether it has power to perform the reputed spiritistic phenomena. These questions, in turn, prompted others concerning spirits, such as fallen angels or demons, their existence, nature, intellect, natural powers to assume human forms, and to act upon material things. In all these we have followed the teachings of the great masters, Thomas Aquinas, Suarez, and other eminent theologians. In the clear light of these luminaries of Divinity, the reader may see unmasked the real nature of the spirits of Spiritism that are wont to work in darkness, and so come to understand why communication with them is banned by the Church as illicit and fraught with moral dangers.

In our treatment of the subject from a Christian point of view, we have not followed the idiosyncratic notions of this or that individual, but have adhered, as we think it will appear, to the orthodox position of the Church, as expressed by her Councils, the decrees of the Holy Office, and her recognized eminent moralists.

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SPIRITISM
FACTS AND FRAUDS

CHAPTER I

REVIVAL OF SPIRITISM

AMONG the many consequences of the recent international conflict, chroniclers are wont to mention the strange revival of Spiritism. A few decades ago, the cult was reduced in America, the land of its birth, to a small number of devotees, who carried on their dark séances amid the dingy surroundings of remote quarters. If at times it acquired public attention, it was only to discredit it the more by the exposé of the frauds which doubting Thomases were bent upon detecting. "Among the civilized nations of Europe," says Mr. Merville, "the cult of evocation of spirits was confined to persons of weak mentality and of a low order of intelligence."

But no observer of the times can fail to notice that Spiritism is now active in our midst. Within the last few years, it has arrested public attention, awakened general interest, and in fact undergone a revival in the attainment of a growth similar to that it enjoyed in America in 1854. Its National Association, firmly seated in Washington, is the focus of its activities, which are manifested in the public press, in the prac-

tise of innumerable mediums, and in lecture halls, where its principles are expounded by home talent and by foreign importations. Having won to its cause a few men eminent in one branch of science or another, it has utilized them to the full in an itinerant propaganda that has attracted public interest, and gained unusual free advertising.

It is now, however, obvious that Spiritism has won the adherence of many men and women in all the walks of life. The fact will seem nothing strange if we consider the multitudes in our midst who, loosed from the moorings of Christianity, and adrift upon the uncharted sea of materialism, are not only ignorant of all things supernatural, but also of the true nature of Spiritism as exposed in the pages of Sacred Scripture, and in the teachings and the precepts of the Church.

Much is said of the great development and improved scientific methods of modern times, but any close observer will, nevertheless, discover that the same influences which were potent in the ancient world of Antony and Cleopatra, still sway the belief and conduct of millions in our day. He will find men just as credulous, as superficial, and as loath to trace things to their causes as they were of old. He will see a proof in the modern "isms" which are now as much in vogue as were Oriental cults during the decadent epoch of the Roman Empire. Besides Eddyism, Dowieism, Theosophism, Spiritism, and

others of like nature, we have with us many nebulous creeds which, devoid of Christian dogmas, are at best decked out with some few half-truths, or blazoned as psychological discoveries, in order to attract the floundering multitude.

The desire of enjoying emancipation from the moral restraints of the Christian faith, and of being in touch with what seems the most advanced and up-to-date, exercises a powerful influence over minds of a certain calibre. The common lack of some needed counterpoise was evidenced in the universal propagandism during the World War. Where one man tried to trace back a story to its source, one hundred accepted it unverified, as though it were gospel truth. Where thousands will swallow unquestioned the pretentious assumptions of a new "ism," only a few will inquire what sort of men and women are the founders who claim to have a divine commission to save the world from its woes. There is no common attempt to get behind the appearances of things. The bolder and more impudent the bluff, the better it seems to succeed. Hence, we behold the spectacle of men in great numbers who never enter a Christian temple to hear the well-attested truths of a divinely-revealed religion, flocking to public halls to hear an imported lecturer dilate upon the novel but unsubstantiated claims of the reviving spiritistic cult.

It is far from pleasant to dwell upon the historic fact that the human mind when unillumined by divine

revelation, made little progress through the ages in the solution of supreme questions which vitally affect the eternal destiny of man. In the days of Our Lord, the Pharisees disputed with the Sadducees concerning the existence or non-existence of spirits. The Sadducees, as extreme materialists, denied the resurrection of the dead, the reality of angels good or bad, and the immortality of the human soul. Those Sadducees of old have, under a less disreputable name, grown to legions in our materialistic world. After the Church, their greatest enemy is Spiritism, and Spiritism in turn finds its greatest enemy in Christianity, not as minimized in the multiform sects, but as embodied in the concrete in the Church. "If Protestants," says a well known spiritist, "mean to win their victory over their enemy, the Catholic Church, they must call in the aid of spiritists, and profit by their inspiration."

Modern Spiritism is in substance as old as civilization, and exhibits a characteristic common to all forms of superstition. The history of the Christian era records that wherever the true religion had lost its influence upon a people, there the Black Arts found a fertile field for propagation. Hence, their rise and progress has always been deemed a sure index of decay in religious thought and practises. This decadence in our day is certainly marked by the ready acceptance of Spiritism by non-Christian multitudes. A common factor is the fascination

which, by a law of our human nature, the mysterious and the marvelous always wield over the imagination —a fascination so strong and so enticing as often to prove, even when unlawful, a potent and dangerous temptation to the virtuous. The one safety against this natural foible, lies in Christian doctrines, laws, and traditions, which form a solid wall against the inborn curiosities and consequent illicit desires that the new superstition strongly engenders. That wall of the supernatural religion once broken, Spiritism finds a ready ingress.

Another factor, no less favorable to the growth of Spiritism, arises from the disturbed conditions in our social and political world. During recent years was often heard the assertion that the World War with its bitter animosities and destruction of life was a final and crushing demonstration of the failure of Christianity. But, wondrous to say, the claim was made by men who, either indifferent or hostile to the Christian religion, practised in their lives none of its salutary precepts.

The future philosopher of history will, no doubt, observe that the War arose, not because the Christian religion was inherently powerless to prevent it, but because the politicians of that time ignored its principles, or refused to apply them in the management of civil or national affairs. He will, therefore, lay the blame upon the group of men in control of the policy of the leading European nations. They re-

fused to harken to the warning voice of the spiritual ruler of a universal Christendom, and accepted the common, but erroneous, notion of the social impracticability of Christianity, and, from the popular utterances of their respective governments, many ecclesiastical authorities in every State took their cue, and, with little or no criticism, accepted the official point of view as their own. "Our country right or wrong" seemed the prevailing sentiment. The War, in fact, was due to the supplanting of Christian principles by an all-pervading gross materialism.

To-day, that same spirit enslaves the minds and hearts of men who, devoid of faith in the supernatural, feel no relish for the invisible good of their higher spiritual nature. Multitudinous, they comprise sixty per cent of our many millions, and, unregenerated by baptismal water, profess no religious affiliation. Without any definite belief in the divine truths of Christian revelation, they live practically as pagans, wholly satisfied to make this earth, with its narrow-bound horizon, the "be all and the end all" of their lives, hopes, and aspirations. Under such circumstances, they gladly welcome any novelty, whether in the guise of Spiritism or other mysterious cults.

These conditions are not bettered by the many warring Christian sects. Their conflicting doctrines have on all sides bred, if not scepticism, at least an indifference to religion, which induces multitudes to theorize, on the one hand, that all religions are equally

good, (though they practise none); and, on the other, the sophism that it matters not what a man believes, provided he does what is right. Every Christian regrets that many leaders of the sects, in their helpless fall before the antichristian assaults of Rationalists and the so-called higher critics of the Bible, have also lost their former influence upon the masses. Each, so far as it preserves certain Christian doctrines, is capable of good, and is certainly far preferable to rank materialism and infidelity.

Of the popular opinion concerning the present ineptitude of the Christian sects, a non-Catholic writer in the *Nation*[1] says:

> "In their attitude toward the Church [Protestant] thinking people nowadays fall into three classes. Their feeling is one of ridicule, or pity, or indifference. That this is a moderate statement of the facts is sufficiently proved by the utterances of ecclesiastics, as well as by observation. . . . A few generations ago, the Lambeth Conference would have commanded widespread attention. As it was, people looked with smiles or with genuine sadness at its impotent gesticulations. The same attitude is evidenced toward other Protestant churches; the mass of citizens pay no more heed to their pronouncements than to the buzzing of flies. . . . Unable to hold or capture young people with the messages of salvation, the Churches are driven to adopt all

[1] Oct. 4, 1922.

sorts of extraneous methods; they organize boys' and girls' clubs, supervise dance-halls, install billiard tables in the basement. All these things are scarcely religious; they rather suggest putting cut flowers in the limousine when the batteries are dead."

Of this loss of Christian faith, which is the bulwark against the encroachments of Spiritism, a learned Oriental who recently traveled through Europe and America with the sole interest of studying carefully the religious and social life of Occidental peoples, writes as follows:

"While millions of dollars and armies of missionaries are being employed to proselytize Oriental peoples, unbelief is rapidly spreading among all classes of the Christian nations, and Europeans and Americans are descending from a God-fearing, church-going, moral people to a Mammon-serving, pleasure-loving, immoral people."

The dechristianizing of the masses is due to the bright lights of the diverse sects, who, charmed with the songs of such antichristian sirens as, Rationalists, higher critics, and pseudo-scientists, have let slip the sole anchor of their faith, and with it their belief in the authenticity and inspiration of the Sacred Books. As a consequence, they preach a denatured Christianity, in which they explain away the Divinity of Christ and other fundamental truths of revelation, and for the old Biblical faith substitute a merely

natural religion; and thus the multitude, thrown back upon fallen nature, offers a fallow field for the sowing of Satan's cockle.

It is but another instance of the modern mind of each particular age asserting itself against the insistent claims of contemporary Christianity. The world may profess to despise the supernatural, but in reality it always fears it, and seeks to make terms with the Church, just as Satan, the prince of this world, tried to bargain with the Messias. The Church can make no compromise with the modern mind. Harmony can exist only when the human mind accommodates itself to the Divine, and not vice versa. Ignoring this fundamental truth, many leading preachers of the sects have surrendered their impregnable citadel to the attacking forces of a modernistic world.

Many high ecclesiastical lights in England and in America have gone over to the latest modern "ism." It professes to remodel or to renew Christianity according to the ideas of the twentieth century; that is, to adapt it to the moral and social needs of the day. An accredited leader is Dean Inge, who says: "a profound reconstruction is demanded. The new type of Christianity will be more Christian than the old, because it will be more moral."

Modernism, thinks Dr. Bosanquet, will unite all Christians in harmony with the spirit of the age. "It is the S. O. S. of humanity.—What must I do to

be saved? In the unity of love and will with the supreme good you are saved, you are free, you are strong. This is *religion.* We must not let go our main grasp on the *values*—love, beauty, truth."—"But that," exclaims Mr. Frederick Harrison,[2] "is what all who reason about religion have said, from St. Paul to Auguste Comte. The formula would cover the Pope, General Booth, the Chief Rabbi, the Sheik-ul-Islam, and a Chinese Mandarin. As Aristotle said of Plato: It is beautiful, but is it practical?"

Spiritism finds no impediment to its progress either in Modernism or in the dechristianized sects. In their midst arises no divine, like De Witt Talmadge, to denounce the new Necromancy. In his day, he never ceased to decry Spiritism with his forceful eloquence. "What," he cries, "does God think of these delusions? He thinks so severely that He never speaks of them but with livid thunders of indignation; for all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord."

As in America so in England exists the same turning away from the supernatural. Hence, like the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Professor Armstrong protests in indignation against the spiritual rulers of the Anglican Church, who fail to guard their flocks from the rising superstition. He writes:

> "It appears to me to be a cumulative and forceful gravamen against a movement every re-

[2] *Novissima Verba,* p. 164.

spect of which is pernicious alike to the prime movers and to the public; one which at all costs, in support of human outlook, we should seek to stamp out with every weapon at our command. . . . That neither the Church [Anglican] nor educated opinion should have had the courage, the sense of duty, to take real exception to its promulgation, cannot well be regarded otherwise than as a proof that we are living in a period of intellectual decadence."

This state of things at home and abroad has opened wide the door to antichristian dogmatizers of Materialistic or Rationalistic schools. For them Spiritism has a special attraction. Unopposed in the main by preachers of the Gospel—many of whom, like soldiers in a panic, have thrown away their powerful weapons from the armory of reason and divine revelation—these antichristian innovators have by specious arguments acquired an ever-growing sway over the minds of unthinking multitudes. Against this apostasy of misinformed preachers, the Rev. Dr. Hamilton, a well-known Baptist, utters the following strong protest, as reported in the *New York Herald:*

"Every great Protestant Church has sadly departed from the faith. Our churches have become the hotbeds of infidelity, higher criticism and evolution. The monkey-gospel is to-day predominant in the Protestant Church. The Bible has been reduced to a classic."

These preachers, if better versed in Christian

philosophy and theology, as well as in the present position of evolution as expounded by the most eminent scientists of Europe, would not have been swerved from the Christian faith by the false assertions of pseudo-scientists who, without an iota of substantial proof, assume a theory, a supposition, a possibility, to be a well-proved fact, and by reason of their position of supposed erudition, readily win the ungodly as a matter of course, and seduce many unthinking men, as well as the unlearned masses. Their insidious teaching is abetted by the "Yellow Press," whose characteristic is a fondness for the sensational. Recently it broadcasted the new wondrous discovery in Patagonia of a human skull of the Tertiary Period. "It was another proof of Darwinism." But that "Yellow Press" did not herald the judgment of a committee of eminent scientists who, after a studious examination, declared that the supposed skull, being merely a curiously-shaped stone, possessed no scientific value.

Another cause of the revival of Spiritism arose and gained strength in England during the World War, and soon spread to America. Multitudes in affliction over sons lost in France, eagerly desired, if possible, to communicate with them, and this desire was nurtured by professional mediums, and other occultists, who suddenly multiplied, as appeared from the glaring advertisements of their wondrous powers in the public press. Among the many bereaved were

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certain Rationalists and scientists of note. Their schools for more than forty years had, in a sceptical contempt of Spiritism and its phenomena, maintained the non-existence of life beyond the grave, and had labored to win men to worship science instead of God, but now, some of them by a sudden somersault faced about, and as stoutly affirmed their belief in Spiritism and in the immortality of the human soul.

The defection of Sir Oliver Lodge was most harrowing to his confrères in the scientific field, and the defense of his apostasy in public print only humiliated them the more, and caused them to open their batteries upon him. "In letters to the press," says Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J.,[3] "in magazine articles, and some in bulky volumes have fallen tooth and nail upon the author of *Raymond*, and torn him, metaphorically speaking, limb from limb."

In a recent book, Mr. Clodd writes:

> "You, Sir Oliver, knowing as you must have known, the taint which permeates the early history of Spiritism, its inception in fraud, etc. . . . have proved yourself, on your own admission, incompetent. . . . What is more serious, your maleficent influence gives impetus to the recrudescence of superstition, which is so deplorable a feature of these days. The sellers of thousands of *mascots*—credulity which as life-preservers and luck-bringers is genuine—the palmists and other professors of the occult, have in you their

[3] *The Month*, Vol. CXXXI, p. 150.

> unacknowledged patron. Thus you, who have achieved high rank as a physicist, descend to the plane of the savage animist, surrendering the substance for the shadow. Surely the mysteries which in your physical researches meet you at every turn, baffling your skill to penetrate, should make you pause ere you accept the specious solutions of the momentous problems which lie on the threshold of the *Unknown* Hereafter."[4]

In a postscript to Mr. Clodd's Book, Dr. H. Armstrong, F.R.S., describes *Raymond* as "obscurantism run riot," and regrets that the fair name of science should be sullied by the publication of this nauseating drivel." More extraordinary perhaps, is the following passage from the book of Dr. C. H. Mercier:

> "Such an exhibition of credulity has not been seen since Moses Primrose returned from the market in proud possession of a gross of spectacles with silver rims and shagreen cases. Really, when I read this naïve and innocent account of his own simplicity, I wonder if Lady Lodge ever allows him to go out in the street without a nurse to see that he does not bring home a gross of sentry boxes or chimney pots, or left-hand gloves, or something equally profitable."[5]

This rationalistic indignation might be excusable if prompted by the evils which may follow the promiscuous reading of *Raymond* by persons wholly

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[4] *The Question: If a Man Die Shall He Live Again?*, p. 298.
[5] *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*, p. 85.

unable to sort and appraise its data, or even to grasp the author's own point of view. The book has, no doubt, produced many deplorable results. But the secret of this frantic denunciation of Sir Oliver seems to arise from the conviction that the recognition which he accords to psychical research in Spiritism, is a menace to materialistic science, the science which makes the final test of truth, the scalpel, the balance, and the microscope alone. Hence, when Sir Oliver has the audacity to maintain that demonstrated truth may exist there, they hold him to be a traitor to the sacred cause of science, and consequently a person to whom no quarter should be given.[6]

Spiritists have often expressed the sanguine hope that their cult would be the death-blow to materialism, but the contrary seems true; for many scientists decry the spiritistic theory as a mere assumption, and ascribe the phenomena if real and not fraudulent, to other causes. When, as proselytes of the new cult, Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Conan Doyle recently visited our shores to illumine benighted Americans concerning the new and all-important discovery of man's survival after death, surely they were the laughing stock of all Christians, to whom their wondrous discovery is as old as Christianity. Christians need no ouija-board, nor "ectoplasmic phantoms," nor the mutterings of hysterical mediums, to learn a truth

[6] Vid. *Month*, Vol. CXXXI, p. 153 *et seq.*

as old as humanity itself. Not so, however, with neophytes of the new cult. Barred by materialistic views from examining the solid proofs offered by Christian philosophy and Divine Revelation, they have in vacant mind eagerly listened in séances to the mediumistic pratings of masquerading spirits, of whose identity they have no particle of proof that stands the test of unbiased judicial minds.

Any advance of Spiritism in our midst must be attributed to the unusual conditions of our times. If we consider the widely-diffused spirit of materialism, which is manifested in religious unrest, or in indifference to, or rejection of, the supernatural; if we recall to mind the ignorance of the masses concerning the divinely-revealed doctrine in regard to the existence of fallen angels, and their persistent efforts, under various guises, to lead men away from God; if we observe that Spiritism, always keeping in touch with the times, marvelously panders to human passions, however groveling, and by eliminating the doctrine of original sin, of future punishment, and the need of Redemption, releases man from all restraints which Christian faith dictates in regard to the interests of his immortal soul; if, in fine, we dwell in summary upon the credulity of mankind, the strangeness of the new belief, the craving of sceptical or non-Christian minds for proofs of the soul's immortality, the crudeness of modern psychology, the all-prevalent loose-thinking, the ready

newspaper advertising—all offering a helping hand, it cannot seem strange that Spiritism, with its bare assumptions, though long discredited and ridiculed by the learned and scientific world, should now enjoy a brief revival among a so-called Christian people.

Its progress has been, furthermore, advanced by the fact that it has won a few neophytes whose scientific fame clothes the cult with a specious respectability that allures many victims of wandering and uncertain minds. Such do not see that if a man be eminent in physics, as is Sir Oliver Lodge, or in novel writing, as is Sir Conan Doyle, that fact does not give him eminence, nor make him a fit guide in other sciences, such as astronomy, or philosophy, or theology, of which he knows scarcely anything. No sane man would hasten to a blacksmith-shop to have a horse-shoer fill out the prescription of his physician.

The credulity of humankind seems unlimited. Of Sir Conan Doyle's recent lecture in New York,[7] Mr. Arthur Brisbane, a syndicate writer for the press, says:

> "If an angel had come down last Monday to observe and report progress, he would fly back home to-day and say: 'No progress to report.' . . . In New York City great crowds are shown spirit 'photographs' of dead soldiers, fraudulently made, of course, and they sob in superstitious excitement. Superstition changes its shapes, but maintains its hold on the world."

[7] Apr. 9, 1923.

Concerning the number of spiritists to-day, no reliable statistics are available. The census for 1900 gave the total number in the United States as 45,000. In 1910 the National Spiritistic Association claimed 150,000 avowed adherents, with a constituency of 2,000,000. There are, says the *Americana* of 1908, about 1,500 mediums before the public, and perhaps 10,000 others exercise their gifts in their own homes or among a few friends only.

Sir Conan Doyle in public lectures never tires of assuring his hearers, that a large number of scientists and medical men have endorsed Spiritism. They can but take his word; for very few of the writings of continental scholars have been translated into English, and in these few the translator has taken much liberty with the text. Sir Conan's position is, moreover, very remarkable, and unknown to most of his American auditors. Many of the European scientists whose support he claims, are materialists or at least agnostics, and use very disdainful language about Spiritism. The few who have admitted the reality of some phenomena, have not admitted their causes to be spirits, and therefore do not support Sir Conan. But an author famed for fiction is not supposed to be famed for logic. Any Christian may, on sufficient evidence, admit a certain phenomenon to be a reality, without at the same time admitting it to have been done by a disembodied soul, as Spiritists claim. This claim is the real gravamen

of the scientists. While Sir Conan goes about lecturing on the reality of spiritistic phenomena, he fails to meet the main point at issue; namely, to prove that they are produced by disembodied souls. Reiterated assumptions may impress the masses, but scientists who perceive their emptiness, are still calling for convincing proofs of his claim.

The effect of the Great War on the spiritistic movement was the same in America as in England. Thousands who were devoid of any religious influence, turned in their bereavement to Spiritism, which held out the promise of giving the desired consolation. "A very high proportion of its recent converts were thus obtained. It may well be doubted whether Sir Conan Doyle would ever have become more than a sympathetic outsider if he had not lost a son. A like loss by Sir Oliver Lodge proved of equal importance. One meets everywhere men and women who were drawn into the movement on these grounds, and historians will find it difficult to trace any other cause more influential."

The enthusiastic advance of Spiritism, says the same author, continued in England until the spring of 1920, when the press began to divulge some very awkward facts. Sir Conan Doyle, with much ado, had brought two Welsh mediums to London; but in opposition Mr. Silbert, a magician, got up counterfeit sittings, performing the most astounding phenomena. A new literature of exposure began to be written

over again, and the general public, it was thought, would soon tire of the subject, and return to a mood of criticism. But though challenges were thrown out which could not be met, and though a member of the Society for Psychical Research advertised a promise of $5,000 for the production of a single phenomenon, the devotees remained unaffected, and, strange to say, despite the continued exposure of frauds on the part of numerous mediums, the superstitious cult neither waned nor lost public interest.

The conditions thus described in England are, no doubt, the same in America. After the War, Sir Conan Doyle came to our shores to enkindle anew the fires of the cult and to rouse popular interest. But his efforts proved evanescent and like Mr. Coué, he was, on his passage, soon forgotten. The cultured admire him as a famed fictionist, but regret his turning his rare gift to flooding cheap magazines with sensational articles in which, with an astounding dogmatism, he extols vague and undigested doctrines at the expense of the teachings of traditional Christianity. Long an agnostic, he has acquired but a very distant acquaintance with the true tenets of the Church of Christendom.

Christians necessarily differ in their relation to Spiritism from the children of man-made religions, and still more from materialists, who in darkness wander without the guiding light of Divine Revelation. Many Christians, firm in their faith of the

supernatural, readily conclude, from the strange things they hear of spiritistic practises, that the cult with its work is all *diablerie*. Again other Christians, impressed by what they learn on all sides, even from coreligionists, concerning frauds innumerable, are apt to assume that the phenomena are nothing more than trickeries and sleight-of-hand performances. These two classes may, in some degree, be immune from the infection of Spiritism, because neither the first will have aught to do with *diablerie*, nor the second, willingly submit to deception by charlatans.

A third class of Christians readily perceive the flaw in the foregoing imperfect, or incomplete, induction. Of a more judicial mind, resulting from a better education and acquaintance with the realities, they see, now and then cropping out amid the mass of frauds common to professional mediums, certain effects which seem so evidently preternatural, that Christian psychologists and theologians deem them inexplicable by any theory of trickery or delusion.

Sir Oliver Lodge, in speaking of the present state of Spiritism, writes: "we may agree that at present [spiritistic] Territory under exploration is not yet a Scientific State. We are in the pre-Newtonian, possibly the pre-Copernican, age of this nascent science, and it is our duty to accumulate facts, and carefully record them for a future Kepler to brood over."

But it is also the duty of psychologists and theologians of the Church, while denying that Spiritism is a science, to study those facts, in order to see whether they transcend the powers of nature, and clearly reach the preternatural; and when they do, to caution the faithful against having aught to do with such phenomena.

This guidance is more necessary in the case of a fourth class of Christians who, from a crass or invincible ignorance, lack adequate or accurate information concerning the practises of Spiritism and its antichristian teachings. In their association with non-Christian or non-religious men, they hear Spiritism discussed, advocated, and its phenomena set forth attractively, so that, in ignorance of its real nature and of the Church's ban upon it, they are readily influenced to deem it a harmless and permissible practise.

If Spiritism pervert any Christian, it is usually from this fourth class of the Church's children, who, in many cases, neither know nor practise their religion. In solicitude for such erring members, the Church has again, as late as 1917, issued a decree admonishing all the faithful to abstain entirely and unconditionally, from all spiritistic gatherings and practises.

Condemned to work in darkness, Spiritism cannot appeal to instructed Christians, who see it verify in itself the words of Our Lord to Nicodemus, "The

Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the Light: for their works were evil. Everyone that doth evil hateth the Light, and cometh not to the Light that his works may not be reproved."[8]

[8] St. John, iii, 19.

CHAPTER II

SPIRITISM, OLD AND NEW

THE weird and mysterious have at all times exercised an attraction for the human mind. Man's natural desire to know the unseen and the future has impelled him in every age to lift the veil of futurity by divers superstitious practises. These under various forms are known as divination, sorcery, magic, witchcraft, and necromancy—all ready instruments by which the common enemy of man can intrude himself into human affairs. Of hoary age, necromancy may be traced back to primordial peoples, whose earliest chronicles are fabulous stories. It is defined as the divination of the future by questioning the dead, under the belief that souls departed can be communicated with, and can give information regarding the future. Its earliest mention is in Homer's Odyssey, in which Ulysses is described as summoning up certain souls of the dead by means of Incantations prescribed by Circe, a fabulous semi-divine enchantress. Prevalent among all pagan peoples, it thrived in ancient Egypt, in China, and among the fakirs of India. The magicians of Chaldea introduced it into Persia, where it constituted an important element of religious worship. Ancient Greece and Rome, even in the heyday of

civilization, had many famous oracles of the dead; and in their temples persons in trance or somnambulistic sleep gave utterances purporting to come from souls departed. Socrates and Aristotle are said to have conversed with the dead. Cicero, Horace, and other classic writers testify to the prevalence of necromancy in their day. The conspirators against the Roman Emperor Valens questioned magic tables after the manner of modern spiritists.

Judea, though divinely governed, was not exempt from the superstitious plague. The Jews in their repeated exile among pagan peoples, and in their mercantile intercourse with gentile provinces bordering on Palestine, acquired the knowledge and practise of necromancy. In several books of the Old Testament it is emphatically condemned as a rebellion against the expressed will of God, and is solemnly forbidden by laws of direst sanction. "Necromancy and other superstitions," writes Sir William Barrett,

> "were condemned in unmeasured terms by the Hebrew prophets. . . . They were prohibited, as the study of the whole subject shows—not only, or chiefly, because they were the practises and part of the religious rites of the pagan nations around, but mainly because they tended to obscure the divine idea and to weaken the supreme faith in and reverent worship of the One Omnipotent Being whom the nation was set apart to proclaim. . . . Instead of the arm of the Lord beyond and above them, a motley crowd of pious,

> lying, vain, or gibbering spirits would seem to people the unseen; and weariness, perplexity, and, finally, despair would enervate and destroy the nation."

In modern times necromancy still survives among pagan peoples. Three centuries ago, explorers and missioners, as recorded in the *Jesuit Relations*, witnessed many instances of Spiritism among the aborigines of North America. Each tribe had its medicine men, or mediums, who according to their needs invoked the aid of spirits. They could tell the tribe where their enemies were, where game was to be found, what were their diseases, and prescribe remedies. But they made no secret of the nature of their tutelary spirits. They were not disembodied souls, but real evil spirits or demons, who, for favors granted, demanded and even prescribed certain forms of worship. Of these North American Indians, the author of *Modern American Spiritualism* writes: "The clairvoyant faculties, prescient powers, and general results obtained through their Spiritualism correspond closely with those of their civilized neighbor, but the modes of invocation differ essentially."[1]

The first and most powerful enemy of necromancy was Christianity. Through the centuries, the Church has on Scriptural grounds stood adamant against all ancient and modern forms of superstition. Though

[1] 2d ed. New York, 1870.

in her doctrine of the communion of saints she teaches an actual intercourse between the Church warring on earth and the Church triumphant in heaven, and also that, with God's permission, an individual soul departed can return to earth, and disclose things unknown to the living, yet her theologians have at all times maintained that the evoking of the dead, contrary to Divine ordination, is a special mode of divination due to diabolical intervention.

A perusal of the literature of ancient and medieval *diablerie* discloses the fact, that modern Spiritism differs from necromancy only in accidentals. It is new in the abundance and continuance of manifestations, which had been held in check in earlier times known as the Ages of Faith; new also in the readiness of many people to look upon it as a fresh and saving revelation, rather than the efforts of Satan and his legions to perplex and delude the unwary. Even a casual examination of the evidence in regard to exorcisms of possessed and obsessed persons, will disclose a similarity between some of the facts mentioned in such cases and those of the spiritistic movement. The sounds of knocking, rapping, throwing down heavy objects, the rush of unseen bodies, and other phenomena, as well as the oaths, blasphemies, and vile language used by persons when unconscious under spiritistic influence, recall a whole class of similar facts connected with obsessions and possessions, or with those unlawful dealings with the un-

seen world, which are denounced by Sacred Scripture and forbidden by the Church.

The relations between the visible and the invisible world still remain the same, but a change has occurred in the social and religious conditions of our times. A common, frivolous laxity makes men more ready to play irreverently with phenomena of the spiritistic kind, and the low level of belief and moral feeling among many fallen-away Christians, and others of no religious creed, cause them to accept without repugnance an influence which has a direct tendency to undermine both the positive doctrines of Christianity and much of the moral foundation, on which all pure and severe virtue must rest. If the development of Spiritism, in its ebb and flow, since its appearance under the modern phase, in 1848, seem to some unprecedented, it is only so in its new adaptation to the notions and tastes of peoples of the nineteenth century. We have no grounds for believing that it is in principle different from what existed —unchronicled in the main—in ancient times among the heathen, or what we know exists in our day in non-Christianized countries, where the powers of evil have never been exorcised by the living Church of God. The principles actuating a Christian soul after baptismal regeneration, and especially the possession of the divine gift of faith, not only check the many instincts of our fallen nature, which are fostered by an unchristian atmosphere, but also curb the inclina-

tion to yield to the fascination of superstitious practises whenever they present themselves.

These moral characteristics, engendered by a virile Christianity and always hostile to superstition, are chronicled by a recent non-Catholic author, as absent at the period when modern Spiritism originated.

> "The nineteenth century [he writes] was just entering upon a very dangerous period of materialism or absorption in this visible world and its concerns. . . . On the one hand, there was a new scientific movement, and on the other, the authority of the [Protestant] Churches was visibly failing. It was just the time for a new revelation. Philosophy and theology, the wings on which men had hitherto risen to higher spheres, were drooping. . . . There can be no doubt that the decay of the older creeds had much to do with the rise of the modern movement. There was a good deal of what is broadly known as 'occultism' in the world in the first half of the nineteenth century. When religion decays, a large number of what they call 'superstitions' appear."[2]

"Animal Magnetism," commonly known as Mesmerism, especially prepared minds for the acceptance of Spiritism. Persons, mostly women, says the same writer, developed in mesmeric sleep remarkable powers of clairvoyance. Groups of men and women formed everywhere those circles, for the production of phenomena, which have come to be called séances.

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[2] *Spiritualism, a Popular History from 1847*, Chap. 1.

The ghost-story, moreover, was at that time the most popular form of literature. The haunted house was as common as the public house. The great majority of the people believed that at any time spirits of the dead might rap on their doors at midnight, trail ghostly chains along the corridor, or make in sepulchral tones some terrible communication from another world.

These conditions may in part explain the rapid progress of Spiritism. But there were, thinks Mr. Frank Podmore,[3] other powerful factors which usually attend a new and speedily expanding civilization. Diffusion of education was in some respects mischievous. In the older civilization the world of ideas still formed an oligarchy with a constitution to some extent fixed and defined, in which recognized standards and precedents existed for the guidance of thought in every department. But in the American Republic of the time, every man claimed the right to think for himself, and as extravagantly and inconsequently as he chose.

Geographical conditions, moreover, gave speculation a freedom which would have been impossible in a more settled society. Even the Eastern States were sparsely settled, and civilization, daily enlarging its boundaries, absorbed more and more the unclaimed territory around. In 1850, not thirteen of a hundred

[3] *Modern Spiritualism* I. p. 208, *et passim.*

of the people lived in towns of 8000 inhabitants. Outside of the few large cities was an immense borderland of semi-rural townships carved out of the wilderness but yesterday, and filled with an enthusiastic horde of pioneers, who had learned to read and think from men scarcely better trained and equipped than themselves. In those raw outlying districts there were no intellectual centers through which the gathered experience of centuries could flow, and inevitably there was a large amount of vigorous but crude and undisciplined thinking.

No religious body gave a larger contingent to the new faith than Friends, Unitarians, and Universalists, who formed the outlying fringes of orthodoxy. In their churches, under the powerful solvent of intellectual freedom, the sharp outlines of dogmatic Christianity were already beginning to disappear. The Universalist Church itself was in a troubled state of transition. From an early date in the nineteenth century a bitter controversy had been waged, within its ranks, concerning the nature of the change at death. To religious-minded men who had been preoccupied for more than a generation with the problem of future life, and who had evolved the conception of an existence of probation and progress after death, Spiritism came as a welcome and timely revelation. They grasped with eagerness its signs and wonders, which seemed to hold out the promise of light in darkness in conformity with their own cher-

ished hopes; and their preachers became its most influential and respected speakers and writers.

The new gospel, says Mr. Podmore,[4] appealed to the sympathies of men in diverse ways. To the idly curious who were ruled by mere brute appetite for the marvelous, it offered signs and wonders; to those whose curiosity was of a more instructive kind, it held out hopes of a new development of science which, starting from the physical, should mount up toward the spiritual; to those who looked for an earthly Utopia it dazzled with the promise of a speedy fulfilment of their dreams; to mourners it offered consolation; and to all, seemingly, some light on the mystery of the universe, which at first inspired a genuine enthusiasm.

But the new gospel betrayed itself by its limitations. It lacked the elements of a true religion, the prostration of the heart before the vision of an ideal righteousness, and of the intellect before Supreme Intelligence. Its prophets held their office as self-constituted seers by no ordinance of a higher Power. The Universe contained for them no mystery; their vision was limited by the monstrous shadow cast in their own likeness on the void. Their appeal to the proffered solace of bereaved affection was of a mundane character. Instead of a new knowledge of spiritual things, as known to other religious move-

[4] *Ibid.* II. p. 351.

ments, they promised a practical millennium free from fear of death, and continuing on the gray level through indefinite generations. Their gospel aimed, not at raising earth to heaven, but of bringing down heaven to minister to the needs of earth. No body of men ever presented to the Christian mind a more unlovely picture of the hereafter. They really believed in a material heaven with streets of gold and houses of topaz. It was "Summerland," an earth without pain or disease or death; and its concreteness brought it within their comprehension, and gave sufficient motive power to influence deluded mortals who were ignorant of the Christian heaven, where men in spiritualized souls and bodies live in a higher life of eternal bliss with God and His holy angels.

In opposition to the new cult were no great forces. The many Christian sects of contradictory doctrines were without authoritative guidance, and battled among themselves. The tide of immigration had not yet set in, and amid the population of 20,000,000, there were scarcely more than half a million Catholics to leaven the heterogeneous mass with the vivifying principles of an active supernatural religion.

Spiritists, in English-speaking countries, are wont to call their cult "Spiritualism." The term, however, is no less a misnomer than is "Christian Science," the grandiloquent title with which Mrs. Eddy dubbed her new religion. Catchwords have

ever had a charm for the unwary. Eddyism, is, in truth, neither Christian nor scientific. In like manner Spiritism has nothing in common with Spiritualism. The latter term has for ages been solely employed by philosophic writers to contradistinguish *spirit* from matter. Spiritualism signifies the doctrine based on reason, or sentiment, or faith, that in our universe exist beings that are neither manifest to our senses, nor characterized by the properties of matter, and which, therefore, like human souls and angels, are properly denominated spiritual, as distinct from material, things. Spiritism, on the contrary, as the word connotes, strictly relates to spirits. It is commonly defined as the belief that the souls of the dead in various ways communicate with, and manifest their presence to men, usually through the agency of a person of special susceptibility called a medium. The term Spiritism, thus defined, is in common use among all save English-speaking peoples. It seems to have originated with Allan Kardec, the reputed founder of French Spiritism. He writes:

> "The words 'Spiritualism' and 'Spiritualist' have a well-defined acceptance: to give them a new one by applying them to the doctrine of spirits would be to multiply the causes, already so numerous, of amphibology. Properly speaking, Spiritualism is the opposite of materialism. Whoever believes he has within him something distinguished from matter is a Spiritualist; but it may not follow that he believes in the existence

of spirits, or in their communication with the visible world. To indicate this latter belief, we employ the words 'Spiritism' and 'Spiritist' in place of the words 'Spiritualism' and 'Spiritualist'."[5]

People outside the spiritistic pale, usually hear of the cult only in isolated cases when an itinerant propagandist presents certain remarkable phenomena; or when others that are fraudulent, as faked spirit-photographs, are exposed in the public press, as was recently done in New York and Chicago; or, again, when now and then a sensational article in a newspaper or magazine revives the old question of the reality of such phenomena, on which the cult rests and flourishes. But the main and all-important point is sedulously ignored, both by the press and the spiritists themselves; and that question regards the cause of those phenomena, whether they are the work of disembodied souls, as spiritists assume without proof, or of other spirit-agencies.

Isolated phenomena may sate our curiosity, but they should not deflect our attention from the paramount question, which regards the spiritistic system in its origin and effects, and above all from the history of the sad career of its actual founders. Its devotees, while claiming something providential and divine in the new cult, have never explained why the powers that gave it birth were most unfortunate

[5] *Month*, Oct. 1919.

in the choice of instruments by which their new evangel was to be conveyed to the world.

If, on the one hand, the essence of true religion consists in the recognition of our dependence upon God, as manifested in due worship, love, and obedience, with the further purpose of teaching us how best to live and how best to die, in order to reach our supreme destiny hereafter; and if, on the other hand, Spiritism be a true religion born, not of Satan, but of God, why was it unholy in its founders? Furthermore, why does it not embody in its purposes and practises the given essentials of a true religion? Why, above all, does it lead men, not to God, but away from Him and His divine worship?

Modern spiritists, in general, admit that their cult began with the manifestations in which the two Fox sisters played the principal part. Maggie was then aged fifteen, and Katie was three years younger. A married sister, Leah Fish, who lived in Rochester, became a most important factor in the history of Spiritism. "She was a very shrewd young matron, apparently a widow, making her living by teaching music."

It was in March, 1848, that at Hydesville, in the farmhouse occupied by the Fox family, mysterious raps began to resound on the floor and furniture of whatever room the girls were in. Though the parents were much disturbed, Maggie and Katie were less concerned, and looked upon it as a joke. "Here,

Mr. Splitfoot," said Maggie, snapping her fingers, "do as I do," and the invisible visitor promptly gave the same number of raps. "It was singular behavior for the two august mortals who were chosen out of the whole human race to prepare for the projected invasion of earth from the spirit world."

Mrs. Fox soon took part in the proceedings, and it was agreed with the spirit that an alphabet should be used, and that it should rap to mark the required letter. They came to know that the visitor haunting the house was the soul of a pedler, named Charles Rayn, who had been murdered there, and whose corpse had been buried in the cellar. In fact, no corpse was found in the cellar, and the alleged murderer, whose name was given, turned up afterward at Hydesville, "and threw very hot water on the story." That lying spirit was the forerunner of a crew of others who were in later times to be detected in falsehood.

When the Fox family changed their residence to Rochester, the house ceased to be haunted. The ghosts, now numerous, followed the girls, and strangely conveyed mediumistic powers to relatives and friends. The many visitors to Rochester carried the contagion to their own towns, and, within some months, it spread over the state of New York. Leah, the married sister, was the first to discover that there was money in the business. Maggie and Katie were soon told by the spirits that they must give public

"sittings," and charge for admission, so that a larger audience might hear the truth. The same mandate is still imposed upon divers mediums, who by automatic writings are commanded to spread spirit-messages among ignorant people.

Now, for the first time, "learned spirits," who were charged to help mortals and restore the faith, laid down the best conditions for the production of phenomena. Darkness, they said, was the first condition, and the deeper the darkness, the more varied and intense the phenomena. Music and hymns and cheerful talk were useful at the beginning of a sitting. Too concentrated an attention upon the medium was not desirable. These conditions once known, mediums sprang up in every town, and their spirited rivalry soon led to "chaos," as Mrs. Emma Hardinge, an enthusiastic spiritist admits.[6] "The wildest scenes of confusion arose." Not only did infuriated factions break in and chase the spiritists from room to room, but the scene in the circle itself was often painful. Two or three of the "prophets" jabbered, at once, unknown tongues, while others shouted the war-whoop of the Red Indian. Apostolic letters in miserable grammar and worse spelling were palmed off as genuine productions of the seventh sphere. The Auburn Apostolic Circle was visited only by the most cultivated spirits, yet their messages, as Mrs.

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[6] *History of Modern Spiritism*, p. 52.

Hardinge admits, were in badly-spelled rustic English. Because of troubles, a hundred of the Circle moved out to form an ideal community at Mountain Cove; but this wonderfully-favored group soon broke up in unsavory scandals and quarrels.

Our historian, Mrs. Emma Hardinge, narrates how, in 1855, at her first séance in New York, her attention was drawn to the irreverent way in which the unknown spirits treated the Bible, and ridiculed its records as myths and absurdities.

> "Let any of my readers [she writes], recall their early opinions concerning ghosts, death, resurrection, heaven, hell, spirits and angels, and even then they will form but a faint conception of a rather piously-inclined young girl's horror when informed that souls in bliss descended from their bright abodes to make tables dance, and that angels left the throne of God to say their alphabets to earth, and tell its inhabitants the price of stocks and the best time to buy and sell."

In 1850, the Fox sisters remained the leading mediums, and were doing almost everything that even Eusapia Palladino did in the twentieth century. They won the endorsement of many Universalist preachers, and also of Dr. Hallock, a noted physician, and of Horace Greeley, the editor of the *New York Tribune.* The latter published long and favorable accounts of the movement. Its most important convert was Judge Edmonds, of the New York Supreme Court; and his

accession won other lawyers and judges to the cause. He had for some time been in a state of deep depression on account of the loss of his Christian faith. He clung emotionally to religion, but was intellectually repelled by the doctrines of the prevailing creeds, and was, therefore, well disposed toward a new religion. His despondency was further deepened, in 1851, by a painful bereavement, and he turned to Spiritism for the consolation which it promised. Thus, though he was a capable lawyer of high repute, he was predisposed to admit Spiritism, as appears from his own book, as well as from the reports of his friends. We have a full account of a séance of the New York Circle in May, 1851, which, with Judge Edmonds and a dozen mediums, included twenty persons. Someone suggested that the lights be extinguished, so that a chance might be given for "spirit-lights" in complete darkness. A pandemonium followed. The furniture was turned upside down, the bells were rung, the house was shaken with raps. Mr. Partridge, at whose house they were, describes Judge Edmonds as beside himself, or "in the possession of the spirits." He was heard calling loudly in excitement, "I'm touched —— now, I am tapped on the shoulder —— now, they are at my feet." In the end Edmonds and the mediums, "who seemed to be having the time of their lives," were dragged into a smaller room and the door was shut. There for two or three hours, there was an incredible performance,

which concluded with the singing in chorus of "Auld Lange Syne." This completed the conversion of Judge Edmonds.[1]

Before the end of 1849, the Fox sisters were traveling from town to town, and by 1850 the movement was thinly spread from New York eastward to Boston, and westward as far as St. Louis. In Cleveland there were dancing mediums who were forced to dance for some time whether they liked it or not, and could neither stand nor throw themselves down while under the spiritistic influence. The Swedenborgians and the Universalists, from the point of view of propaganda and organization, were important factors in giving the movement a body of trained speakers. Of twenty apostles of this period, no less than ten were Universalist clergymen, and in their appeals to the public, they were joined by Edmonds and such other eminent persons as Tallmadge and Hare.

Mr. Partridge, a wealthy gentleman, gave liberally to the cause, and founded the *Spirit-Telegraph.* By the summer of 1851, there were six organs in the United States, which reported the most extraordinary phenomena from all sides, and the press in general was ready to give them ample space either in approval or derision. The papers of that day exhibit a bewildering confusion of the wildest claims and the most fantastic eruptions. At this time Leah Fish,

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[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism,* II, p. 232.

the eldest of the Fox sisters, was a music teacher in Boston, and she introduced spirit music, which was a more spiritual manifestation and very popular. A cynical observer noticed that the accordion, the tambourine, and the hand-bell, which are not very difficult to learn, were most commonly adopted. Where the mediums were more cultured, the guitar and the piano were sometimes used in manifestations.

At this period, spirit-writing began to rival the clumsier method of obtaining messages by raps. By 1852 there were no less than 2,000 writing mediums in the United States. Dante dictated a poem of 3,000 lines, not in beautiful language as of old, but in strong provincial American. Whole treatises were dictated, but of such appalling stuff that even Mrs. Hardinge, an enthusiast, was moved to scornful irony. Séances at Boston greatly influenced other mediums. A lady of wealth was a generous convert, and was expected to be more so at her death. To mark their appreciation of her conduct, the "spirits apported" a pure white dove into a closed room. The old lady was more delighted than surprised with the present from spirit-land. In orthodox theory it was of course "apported" by spirits from the nearest woodland; but it was of such singular beauty, intelligence, and gentleness (or rather tameness), that the old lady regarded it as a real visitor from "Summerland."[8]

[8] *Spiritualism, a Popular History from 1847.*

These incidents may give some idea of the credulity prevailing during the period of 1850-1853. There was an epidemic of spiritistic emotion, and people who believed in the reality of Spiritism, also believed that manifestations of every description might occur anywhere. The majority were not only incapable of imposing scientific tests, but were not inclined to impose any. The cold suggestions of reason were unheeded, and fraud naturally prospered in such an atmosphere. Exposures began in 1853, when a cabinet-maker in New York declared that he had been engaged to make tables with hollow legs for mediums. Wires passed through the legs to the next room or the room underneath, for the production of raps without contact. In one place a crowd broke the table, and tore up the floor, and found wires of this description.[9]

In 1854, Spiritism was strong and well-organized in New York. 40,000 members were claimed, and many hundred accredited mediums. A petition with 15,000 signatures was presented to Congress, by Senator Shields, asking the Government to make an official inquiry into the truth of spiritistic claims. But Congress looked upon the petition as a good joke; some members moving that the investigation be entrusted to 3,000 clergymen, others to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, till finally amid laughter it

[9] *Ibid.*

was ordered to "lie on the table." Congress recognized the first principle of all modern "isms," that each individual is the judge of his own religion, and can exercise that right even though it leads him to Materialism, or Rationalism, or Spiritism.

When Spiritism had, in 1854, reached a height which it has never since attained, a contemporary writer affirms that there were 30,000 mediums in the United States. Rapping, writing, and lifting of furniture were now phenomena almost too tame and primitive for the public. Speaking in tongues with which the medium was supposed to be unacquainted, was a common performance. Questions brought in a letter, no matter how the envelope was sealed or fastened, were readily answered. Mozart, Beethoven, and all the great masters, played more than they ever played in life, and the performances were applauded with almost hysterical fervor. Other mediums produced scientific lore, dictated by the spirits of dead scientists. One was the first to announce the real motion of the satellites of Uranus, which Flammarion, a noted astronomer, has thoroughly discredited. Another medium's "control" gave inhabitants to the planet Jupiter, which from its intensity of heat makes human life impossible. Geology was also taken up with like results; in fact, all scientific contributions by supposed spirits of the dead were found to be nonsensical. Though the enormous spiritistic output in poetry, in science, and in art, common to that

period, has left us no single masterpiece, but only a disgraceful mess, buried in oblivion, yet in the fifties, hundreds of thousands of men and women, some of them of considerable culture, seriously believed that those productions were supernormal, and pronounced them "exquisite and sublime."[10]

The reaction against Spiritism in the later 'fifties began with what Mrs. Hardinge calls the "Recantation Movement." A period of caution followed the nine years of emotional credulity. Numerous exposures and scandals occurred, and the general press, which had often recounted wonderful stories in a mood of neutrality, became very critical and even disdainful. The large number of enthusiasts who fell away, affected the spiritistic journals with marked irritation and despondency. In fact, the epidemic stage was over. "The psychology of the crowd," once favorable, began to work against it. "In a word," says a recent author,

> "the prevailing sentiment was hostile. The marvelous stories which had once captivated whole districts were now greeted with laughter. The painfully large number of middle class ladies who had not hesitated to profess extraordinary powers in the 'fifties, shrank materially. Very promising young ladies seem, according to the chronicles of the 'sixties, to have lost or resigned their capabilities. There was no longer the same large social encouragement. In rural districts the

[10] *Ibid.*, Chap. IV.

> crudest mediums still flourished, but in towns there was a change of atmosphere. The abler mediums responded to this change."

They began to suit the manifestations to more critical eyes, to find new varieties of phenomena, and to develop and to perfect these so as to meet the "precautions" of a partly-disillusioned public. Reserving for subsequent consideration the more famous mediums of later periods, we may note that the whole Fox family, which still remained at the core of the movement until the later 'eighties, was able with the aid of such noted experts as Fowler, Gordon, Daniel D. Home, the Davenport brothers, and similar men and women, to carry the cause through the "slump," which continued for some years in America. The people who in calmer days had turned their minds to the "New Revelation," became so engrossed with the burning issues of "State rights," the abolition of slavery, and the resultant Civil War, that Spiritism was almost ignored, and, in consequence, its more famous exponents transferred their activities to other lands.

At that time there were in England many native mediums who were regarded as very powerful, and now abetted by American visitors, they gave a new impetus to the spiritistic cult. An illustration of the credulous temper which existed in London when Katie Fox came to settle there, is afforded by certain incidents. At her marriage to Mr. Jencken, a Lon-

don barrister, on December 14, 1872, the *Medium and Daybreak* of January 3, 1873, in all seriousness records the following occurrences:

> "Raps were heard endorsing the responses in the marriage service, and at the wedding breakfast the spirits grew rampant. A toast was drunk to 'our invisible friends,' and, thereupon, 'the breakfast table, though groaning beneath a richly-served and handsomely-laid repast and a huge wedding cake, was repeatedly raised off the floor'."

Of the son that was born in 1873, marvels were expected, and, indeed, they are recorded in the columns of the *Spiritualist*. At the infant's baptism, the spirits intervened; for in spite of Mrs. Jencken's efforts, in accordance with her promise to Dr. Irons, to keep the spirits quiet, "They came," says the *Spiritualist*,

> "and in a subdued manner rapped in response to the intoning and reading of the service. In the course of the evening, the spirits, with unusually loud raps, by way of reaction from previous restraint, gave the following message to Mr. Jencken: 'Good will come from this baptism; still, we do not consider it all-important for the saving of souls. Your first-born will some day be the instrument of bringing Spiritualism into that church, and many churches of England; therefore this Christening will do great good'."

"At the age of five months," it is said, "the baby

seized a pencil and wrote a long and edifying message in a clear script." In all seriousness, the *Medium and Daybreak* published an ecstatic account, giving a facsimile of that preternatural message. Perhaps it is needless to say that no one saw the babe writing that message. Witnesses, however, did see a pencil in the baby's fingers and a written message beside him. The progress of the marvelous child continued to be chronicled in the spiritistic press. A message announced, it is said, that the boy was to become "the wonder of the world." Spirits would often "lift up his little foot and rap out answers to questions," and at times he would stretch out his hands to catch his invisible playmates, whom he greeted with smiles and caresses. Though these assertions were not properly tested nor verified, they exemplify the usual purblindness of spiritistic credulity, that sees facts in fancies. Those spirit-prophecies were falsified by after-events; that poor child in after life never made even a modest appearance in the annals of Spiritism. Before he was fifteen years old, his mother had solemnly denounced Spiritism as "all humbuggery."[11]

The spiritistic credulity, which reached its height in London in 1875, slowly melted away, upon the numerous exposures of mediumistic frauds. But when the circumstances attending the World War gave it a new lease of life, certain foreign propa-

[11] *Spiritualism, a Popular History*, p. 150.

gandists came at the solicitation of the National Spiritualistic Association to inoculate Americans with their spiritistic virus. The experience of Sir Conan Doyle as a famed novelist in a fancied detection of criminals for many years, no doubt, greatly aided him in discovering ghosts where others could not see them. If he had adhered to his art, he would not in a guileless spirit altogether unworthy of Mr. Watson, have blundered into the historic field to astound Americans with the news that Lincoln was a "Spiritistic President." The claim, as all Lincoln students know, is old and discredited. That Lincoln was cognizant of the much-advertised psychic phenomena of his day, and that, like many others, he was interested in them as something weird and puzzling is indeed credible; but that did not make him a spiritist, nor warrant the rash assertion that he was influenced by mediums in the crisis of government, and wrote the Emancipation Proclamation guided by the advice of Mrs. Nettie C. Maynard. The word of this cheap, self-advertising, and irresponsible woman, a spiritist and interested party, is the sole warrant for Sir Conan's astounding assertion. It is discredited by the fact that Lincoln's biographers, who explicitly treat of his religion, never even hint at his acceptance of the "New Revelation." Further, Dr. William E. Barton, probably the first living authority on Lincoln, writes:

"We learn from other sources that Lincoln per-

> mitted two or three mediums to come to the White House, and to tell him what the spirits said he ought to know; but Lincoln said of them that the advice of the spirits, as thus received, was as contradictory as the voices of his own Cabinet, of whose meetings the séances reminded him." [12]

If Dr. Barton, a serious historian and authority on the topic, says that Lincoln laughed at the mediums, we feel assured that Sir Conan's American audiences will likewise laugh at his simplicity and credulity.[13]

The question must be insistent with many minds that, if, as spiritists assert, the souls departed revisit the earth to enlighten, guide, and preserve their friends from harm, why did they not through their medium, Mrs. Nettie C. Maynard, warn and save the martyred president in the final crisis? On Good Friday he had declined to join a box-party of military notables, whom his wife had invited to Ford's Theater that night. In his kindly heart he feared his attendance on that memorable night would be an offense to a large section of the people, and, only after the persistent importunities of his wife, bordering on hysteria, did he consent at the last moment to accompany the party. Why did not that medium who boasted of guiding Lincoln in the government of

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[12] *The Soul of Abraham Lincoln* (1920), p. 232.
[13] Vid. *America*, Apr. 21, 1923.

the Union, warn him on that fatal night against the assassin's bullet? Here, surely, was a golden opportunity to give the world the much-desired proof for the spiritistic claim.

CHAPTER III

SPIRITISM TAINTED IN ITS ORIGIN

AMONG Christians, a religion to be true, as Spiritism claims to be, must exhibit certain divine credentials. These no man-made religion can possess. Reserving for a later chapter the proofs that Spiritism is not a true religion, we are at present concerned only with its origin. Suffice it to say, that a religion which is tainted in its fountain source is not a God-given or true religion. This principle is beyond contradiction. It was recognized, not only by certain Lutheran writers who have labored hard to whitewash an immoral renegade monk, but also by English authors, who have endeavored to popularize the notion that the foundation of their Anglican religion must be ascribed, not to Henry VIII, but to his [illegitimate] daughter, whom the nobles of her day dubbed in irony the "Virgin Queen." Their efforts have, however, been made abortive by the critical studies of recent historians, who, on the axiom that the religious history of the last three centuries has been a conspiracy against truth, have gone behind traditional fiction, and from researches amid original documents, have given us true portraits of those personages.

In an effort to rid Spiritism of its original taint, Professor Hyslop, perhaps the most distinguished of

American spiritistic writers, seeks to persuade us that it really originated in the work of Swedenborg. But Swedenborg emphatically insisted that his revelation came, not from disembodied souls, but from non-human spirits. Unstable, therefore, as is the claim of Professor Hyslop, it is further in open contradiction to the belief of spiritists in general. They place the birth of the "New Revelation" about the middle of the nineteenth century, at the time when, with the lessening sway of diverse religious sects, came the opportune moment "for the living spirits of those who had 'passed beyond' to rap on the walls of our earthly home, and prepare men for a direct revelation of the truth of immortality."

The first blow struck at the founders of Spiritism was when, in February, 1851, the professors of Buffalo University, not far from Rochester, challenged the Fox sisters to a test. Suspecting that the sounds were produced by the girls cracking their knee- or toe-joints, the committee of investigation so bound their legs that they could not use their toes, and there were no "raps." The report is found in Podmore,[1] whose well-reasoned argument is very damaging to the sisters. But in spite of that crucial experiment, the movement, says the historian, "spread like a fire on a prairie in autumn."

A more serious blow, however, was struck a few

[1] *Modern Spiritualism*, I., p. 184.

weeks later when the sworn affidavit of Mrs. Culver, a relative of the Foxes, was published in the *New York Tribune* of April 17, 1851. She testified that Katie Fox had accepted her proffered assistance, and had confessed to her that they produced the noises by cracking the joints of their toes. They were able to give intelligent and often accurate replies to the sitters concerning their dead relatives, because they watched their faces and carefully felt their way. The affidavit excited much discussion in the newspapers, but the spiritists, replying with vigor, stayed any widespread incredulity. Of their proceedings, an English traveler who had visited the sisters at Rochester, wrote[2] to Mr. Epes Sargent:

> "My opinion of the rappings is that they are human, very human, sinfully human, made to get money by. If really there is a ghost in the matter, then quite certainly he is very fickle, something of a liar, very clumsy, very trifling, and altogether wanting in good taste. It would indeed be painful to me, exceedingly, if I thought that any man on this earth on dying, had ever turned into such a paltry contemptible ghost. . . . My experience will be useful to me in regard to superstition as a disease of the human mind. . . . But to me the knockings themselves are not nearly so wonderful as the echoes they make in the city of New York."

The writer of this letter, curious as it may seem,

[2] *Month*, Vol. CXXXV, p. 125.

later fell a victim to the disease which he had announced as a superstition. The severe public criticism of the Fox sisters, at this period, instead of decidedly checking the movement, only roused their adherents to greater zeal and activity. Though Katie continued engrossed in her mediumship, Margaret gave no séances from about 1856 to 1867. The story of her relations with the celebrated Arctic explorer, Dr. Kane, forms, says Herbert Thurston, S.J.,[3] the most redeeming feature of her career. By common report, Dr. Kane was a wonderfully fine character, clean-living, enthusiastic, courageous to a fault, honorable and most tender-hearted. He met Margaret at a séance, and her beauty and child-like simplicity impressed him strongly. Successful in withdrawing her from contaminating surroundings, he sent her for education to Philadelphia, at his own expense. His own family, of a rather exclusive New York set, opposed his attachment, but eventually a secret marriage took place.

In 1857, Dr. Kane fell ill, was sent to Havana for a cure, and died there without seeing his wife again. When later his biography was published, which celebrated his achievements as a man and explorer, but completely ignored his relations with Margaret Fox, she felt deeply hurt, and sanctioned in self-defense, the publication of a work entitled *The Love-*

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[3] *Month*, Vol. CXXXV, p. 131.

Life of Dr. Kane, which was mostly a compilation of his letters to her. As at this time Margaret had become a Catholic and had given up Spiritism. She exposes without restraint the earnestness with which he had so often pleaded with her to abandon séances. From one letter we quote as follows:

> "Oh, Maggie, are you never tired of this weary, weary sameness of continual deceit? Are you doomed thus to spend your days, doomed never to rise to better things?"

Again he writes:

> "Do avoid 'spirits.' I cannot bear to think of you as engaged in a course of wickedness and deception. Maggie, you have no friend but me, whose interest in you is disconnected from this cursed rapping. Pardon my saying so; but is it not deceit even to listen when others are deceived?"

No reader can peruse *The Love-Life of Dr. Kane* without concluding that his continued and frank exhortations were based on the confession which his fiancée had made concerning the deceptions involved in the life she was leading. The fact that Dr. Kane perceived Margaret's need of some clear rule of life and strong religious influence, explains the strange circumstance that he, a Protestant himself, encouraged her to join the Catholic Church. He, no doubt, knew its uncompromising opposition to Spiritism.

In the work just quoted, we read:

"In August, 1858, Mrs. Margaret Kane became a member of the Catholic Church. Dr. Kane had often advised her to join this Church, and many times had accompanied her to Vespers, at St. Anne's, in Eighth Street, New York. The ceremony of her Baptism at St. Peter's Church in Barclay Street, was attended by a large assemblage. The lady was attired in white, and was accompanied by her sponsors, her father and mother and youngest sister. . . . The occasion was the feast of the Assumption, and the church and altar were decorated. The statue of the Virgin being covered with flowers."

A New York daily described the new convert as follows:

"She is a very interesting and lovely young lady, and is very young. She has large dark Madonna eyes, a sweet expressive mouth, a petite and delicately-moulded form, and a regal carriage of the head with an aristocratic air quite uncommon."

Mrs. Kane remained for ten years more or less faithful to her new religion, but in 1867 she completely succumbed either to solicitations or to the pinch of what was at least relative, poverty. From this date, while in the service of M. H. Seybert, the spiritist, she was provided with an ample salary, but seems to have sunk steadily downward. At what time the habits of intemperance, which toward the end so fatally clouded the career of both sisters, began to manifest themselves, is difficult to ascertain. It is,

however, fair to state that their father was apparently a victim of the same terrible curse, and that the surroundings of the séance room must surely have had the worst effect upon their character.[4]

In the "eighties," when Margaret and Katie Fox were somewhat more than middle aged, there arose a fierce quarrel between them and their elder sister, Mrs. Leah Underhill. The details of the quarrel are not very clear, but in the feud that followed there appeared in the *New York Herald*, of September 24, 1888, a report of an interview with Mrs. Kane, from which we quote but a few extracts:

> "Yes, I am going to expose Spiritualism from its very foundation. I have had the idea in my head many a year, but I have never come to a determination before. . . . I loathe the thing I have been. As I used to say to those who wanted me to give a séance: 'You are driving me to hell': Then the next day I would drown my remorse in wine.
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> "When Spiritualism first began, Katie and I were little children, and this old woman, my other sister, made us her tools. Mother was a silly woman. She was a fanatic. I call her that because she was honest. She believed in these things. Our sister used us in her exhibitions and we made money for her.
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> "Dr. Kane found me when I was leading this life. The woman's voice trembled just here and

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

she nearly broke down. I was only thirteen when he took me out of it and placed me at school. I was educated in Philadelphia. When I was sixteen years old, he returned from the Arctic and we were married."

On October the 9th, of the same year, Katie, now the widow of a London lawyer named Jencken, returned from England and confirmed the testimony of her sister. In an interview printed in the *New York Herald,* she said:

"I regard Spiritualism as one of the greatest curses that the world has ever known. The worst of them all is my eldest sister. I think she was the one that caused my arrest last spring and the bringing of the preposterous charge that I was cruel to my children and neglectful of them. I don't know why it is, she has always been jealous of Maggie and me; I suppose because we could do things in Spiritualism that she couldn't."

On October the 21st, a great meeting took place in the New York Academy of Music. Dr. Richmond, a sleight-of-hand performer, imitated successfully, the slate-writing and mind-reading common to the séance room, after which, Mrs. Margaret Fox Kane gave on the stage a demonstration of the way in which they produced the raps. She next read, in her sister's presence, a short speech, of which we give a few striking utterances:

"That I have been chiefly instrumental in per-

petrating the fraud of Spiritualism upon a too confiding public, most of you doubtless know. The greatest sorrow of my life has been that this is true, and though it has come late in my day, I am now prepared to tell the truth, the whole truth, so help me God!

"I am here to-night as one of the founders of Spiritualism to denounce it as an absolute falsehood from beginning to end, as the flimsiest superstition, the most wicked blasphemy known to the world."[5]

The *New York Herald* of the next morning began its article as follows:

"By throwing life and enthusiasm into her big toe, Mrs. Margaret Fox Kane produced loud spirit-rappings in the Academy of Music last night, and dealt a death-blow to Spiritualism, that huge and world-wide fraud, which she and her sister Kate Fox founded in 1848. Both sisters were present and both denounced Spiritualism as a monstrous imposition and cheat. The great building was crowded and the wildest excitement prevailed at times. Hundreds of Spiritualists had come to see the originators of their faith destroy it at one stroke. They were greatly agitated at times and hissed fiercely. Take it all in all, it was a most remarkable and dramatic spectacle."[6]

The practical demonstration of the rappings given by Mrs. Fox Kane on the public stage in the Academy

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[5] Davenport, *The Death Blow to Spiritualism* (1888), p. 76.
[6] Oct. 22, 1888.

of Music on that same evening is described as follows by the same reporter of the *Herald:*

> "There was a dead silence. Everybody in the great audience knew that they were looking upon the woman who is principally responsible for Spiritualism, its foundress, high-priestess and demonstrator. She stood upon a little pine-table with nothing upon her feet but stockings. As she remained motionless, loud, distinct rappings were heard, now in the flies, now behind the scenes, now in the gallery."

Of the same scene a reporter of the *New York Tribune* says:

> "She had slipped off a shoe to facilitate this scientific investigation, and, putting her stockinged foot upon the board, the audience heard a series of raps, 'rat-tat-tat-tat-tat,' increasing in sound from faint to loud and apparently traveling up the wall and along the roof of the Academy."

Here we may ask, How explain the fact that the "rat-tat-tat," produced by the cracking of Mrs. Kane's toe-joints, were heard by the audience as coming, now from the flies, now from behind the scenes, now from the distant gallery, or from the side wall, or from the ceiling of the Academy? Was that great audience spell-bound by some hallucination? The *Herald* concludes its report as follows:

> "Upon these rappings Spiritualism sprang into life, and here was the same toe rapping it out of existence. Mrs. Kane became excited. She

clapped her hands, danced about and cried: 'It's a fraud! Spiritualism is a fraud from beginning to end! It's all a trick. There is no truth in it.' A whirlwind of applause followed."

These reports of the New York press were collected with much supplementary matter, and published by R. B. Davenport in *The Death-Blow to Spiritualism.*[1] The book was written under the guidance of Margaret and Katie Fox, and contains a facsimile letter from them, authorizing Mr. Davenport to publish the documents and facts.

About a year after Davenport's publication, occurred an important incident which writers against Spiritism often ignore. It is the formal recantation of the previous confession made by the Fox sisters. That of Margaret Fox Kane was made on November 16, 1889, in a document that bears the names of several witnesses, some of them well-known men, and was printed in the New York papers of November 20th of the same year. From that document we quote a few extracts:

"Would to God [said Margaret], that I could undo the injustice I did the cause of Spiritualism when, under the strong psychological influence of persons inimical to it, I gave expression to utterances that had no foundation in fact."

At a further stage of the interview we have the following dialogue:

[1] 1888.

"Was there any truth in the charges you made against Spiritualism?"

"Those charges were false in every particular. I have no hesitation in saying that."

"Won't you name any of those who were instrumental in causing you to make such sweeping charges against the methods of your people?"

"I do not wish to, just now. But I will mention that persons high in the Catholic Church did their best to have me enter a convent."[8]

"Was the offer made you by anyone in this country?"

"No; in London. I had a letter from Cardinal Manning, advising me to abandon this wicked work of the devil."[9]

From Mrs. Fox Jencken's letter to *Light*, it appears that she had already in some sort repudiated her share in the "exposure" at the Academy of Music. Both the Fox sisters died in the same sad and pitiable condition, Margaret in June, 1892, and Katie in the month of March following. Of Katie's last days, the *Washington Daily Star* reports as follows:

"The tenement house of No. 456 West 57th Street, New York, is deserted now, except one room, from cellar to roof. The room is occupied by a woman nearly sixty years of age, an object

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[8] Probably, says Herbert Thurston, S.J., some such institution for inebriates as St. Veronica's Retreat, then existing at Chiswick.

[9] This account with facsimile of signatures of Mrs. Kane and witnesses, appeared in the *Medium and Daybreak*, Dec. 27, 1889, copied from the *Celestial City*, a New York spiritual journal.—Vid. *Month*, Vol. CXXXV, p. 129.

of charity, a mental and physical wreck, whose appetite is only for intoxicating liquors. The face though marked by age and dissipation shows unmistakably that the woman was once beautiful.

"This wreck of womankind has been a guest in palaces and courts. The powers of mind now almost imbecile, were the wonder and study of scientific men in America, Europe and Australia. Her name was eulogized, sung and ridiculed in a dozen languages. The lips that utter little else now than profanity, once promulgated the doctrine of a *New Religion*, which still numbers its tens of thousands of enthusiastic believers."*

The sad fate of the founders of the new cult led certain spiritists to draw harsh lessons. It was after the death of Mrs. Margaret Kane that Mr. James Burns, a progressive spiritist and editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*, wrote as follows:

"We have here a wonderful twofold spectacle; we have a woman giving spiritual manifestations to others, while within herself she is spiritually lost and misdirected. All moral sense and control of mind and desire were gone. Under such circumstances, and with drunkenness, sensuality and moral abasement of all kinds added, is it any wonder that this kind of thing has covered the cause with scandals and left a heap of festering corpses along the course of these forty-five years?"[10]

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* Mar. 7, 1893.
[10] Apr. 28, 1893, p. 258.

Whether we consider the rappings of the Fox sisters as real or fraudulent, the moral degradation of the founders of modern Spiritism is beyond question. In regard to their confession, we must choose between two painful alternatives: if we accept it as true, then Spiritism has been constructed upon systematic imposture; if, on the contrary, we trust the subsequent retraction, then the two mediums who, as spiritists suppose, were divinely chosen to promulgate a new revelation, have, by solemnly appealing to God to witness to a lie, been guilty of the most terrible blasphemy against all they held sacred.

If the former alternative be chosen, it does not follow that modern Spiritism, though born of imposture, continued in its development to be nothing more than fraudulent. There are incontestable facts to prove that the cult, while still enveloped with innumerable deceitful practises, presents nevertheless, some real preternatural phenomena. To distinguish these from the fictitious is often no small difficulty.

There is a third position which is very reasonable and of more common acceptance. The confession of the Fox sisters, says Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J.,[11] as well as its recantation was not wholly false: both contained certain elements of truth and error. There is the strongest reason to believe that they told the truth when they averred that the whole of Spiritism,

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[11] *Month*, Vol. CXXXV, p. 130.

as they knew it, was contaminated by a large admixture of imposture. But Mrs. Fox Jencken also told the truth when she confessed that she had lied in ascribing to trickery all the phenomena that occurred. Spiritism was not all a fraud. Under favorable conditions genuine manifestations often took place, but these could not always be worked at will, and when the spirits were irresponsive or recalcitrant, recourse was had to trickery to supply what was needed, in order to ward off suspicion. The same practise has, beyond all doubt, been detected at séances of even the most famous mediums of later times.

Our conclusions are approved by the marvelously rapid spread of the movement. Of the thousands of mediums who were developed within a few years, it is inconceivable that all were rapping with their knee- or toe-joints. A craze like Spiritism requires some foundation in fact, some real mystery to rouse people's imagination, and to hold them interested. To believe, says Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J., that the whole movement, involving many thousands of people, some of high intellectual eminence, was based on nothing more than mere children's pranks is to manifest a lack of practical judgment and common sense. Even in 1874, while staying at the house of the late Lord Rayleigh, Mrs. Katie (Fox) Jencken, though perfectly motionless and in good light, produced from the door "such loud thumps as one would hardly like to make with one's knee." Sir William Barrett,

who assisted at a séance conducted by Dr. Crawford under the strictest test conditions, reports that knocks of every description were given, and served as means of communication, and that, at a request for something still louder, "there came a tremendous bang which shook the room, and resembled the blow of a sledge-hammer on an anvil." Considering, then, that the large amount of first-class scientific evidence for phenomena of this kind is quite overwhelming, we may conclude that if such things can happen now, there is no intrinsic reason why the Fox girls should not at least occasionally have been similarly favored by the spirits in the early days at Hydesville and Rochester.

Notwithstanding the sad fate of the two founders of modern Spiritism, they are still held in honor by many believers. The editor of a spiritistic journal identified them with the two witnesses of the Apocalypse. They had, he said, to be subjected to ignominy and shame, and their dead bodies shall be in the streets of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, but ultimately they shall be resurrected and placed in honor."[12]

Says Mrs. Emma Hardinge in her *Modern American Spiritualism:* "The 31st day of March, the day when the rappings at Hydesville were answered, is now held sacred as the most memorable of anniversaries by the Spiritualists of America."

[12] *Medium and Daybreak* (Jan. 18, 1889), p. 38.

Truly the vagaries of the human mind are beyond understanding, and the credulity of spiritists, arising from ignorance of the prime mover of their "ism," appears no less astonishing.

CHAPTER IV

MEDIUMS

THE present chapter deals, not with fraudulent, but only with real or *bona fide* sensitives, or psychics. The most important thing for the success of a séance is the active presence of a medium, and his choice of persons with whom he intends to operate. These, usually seated around a table in a darkened room, are collectively known as a "circle." The number of experimenters, says Maxwell,[1] is of great importance. If large, they not only present a bad condition for observation, but also impede the harmony so necessary for success. All in supposed sympathetic attitude of mind in support of the medium, join hands to form the so-called magnetic circle. By this closed circuit, each member contributes the energy of a certain force which is collectively communicated to the medium. As a result of this loss of vital energy, the sitters after a successful séance are generally very tired. An experimenter with the famous medium, Eusapia Palladino, affirms that he was almost overcome with exhaustion.

It is clear, says Maxwell, that some kind of force is emitted by each sitter, which is collected and

[1] *Metaphysical Phenomena*, p. 49.

elaborated by the medium; that the latter recuperates his losses at the expense of the experimenters; that certain persons, more readily than others, furnish the psychic with the force required; and that the emission of this energy is facilitated by a certain sympathy arising from a harmony of ideas, views, and sentiment existing between the experimenters and the medium. When this sympathy and harmony, as well as the personal surrender of the will, are wanting in the members of the "circle," the séance proves a failure. This necessary spiritistic atmosphere is commonly induced by artificial means, such as the singing of hymns, the playing of soft music, and even the offering of prayer. Impersonating intelligences often complain of too much light, and insist upon darkness. For success, their directions must be followed; for they have a decided will of their own, which at times they exhibit in a remarkable obstinacy.[2]

Attempted séances oftentimes prove a great disappointment; for though all the usual conditions be verified, the fact remains that the medium cannot command the spirits, and the sitters must either adjourn the session or pass hours in impatient expectation. On such occasions even the most famous mediums have been known to resort to trickery, in order to preserve their reputation.

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

Horace Greeley, one of the most noted men of his day, has left us an account of his experience at séances. Through his wife, who had recently lost a child and, in her bereavement, had turned for solace to the Fox sisters, he became intimately acquainted with those famous mediums, entertained them for some time at his home, lent them his support through his widely-circulating *Tribune*, and even made more than one effort to rescue them from their undesirable surroundings. As a man of high intellectual attainments, critical judgment, and upright character, his narrative of the effects produced upon him by the many séances of the sisters at his own home and elsewhere, more than sixty years ago, when Spiritism was at its apex, must prove interesting to present-day readers. Of the uncertainties and tedium common to all séances, he complains in his book of *Recollections:*

> "The failures of the 'mediums' were more convincing to my mind than their successes. A juggler can do nearly as well at one time as another; but I have known the most eminent mediums spend a long evening in trying to evoke the spiritual phenomena, without a gleam of success. I have known this to occur when they were particularly anxious—and for obviously good reasons—to astound and convince those who were present and expectant; yet not even the faintest 'rap' could they scare up. Had they been jugglers, they could not have failed so utterly, ignominiously.
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> "But, while the sterile sittings contributed quite

> as much as the other sort to convince me that the rappings were not *all* imposture and fraud, they served decidedly to disincline me to devote my time to what is called 'investigations.' To sit for two dreary, mortal hours in a darkened room, in a mixed company, waiting for someone's disembodied grandfather or aunt to tip a table or rap on a door, is dull music at best; but so to sit *in vain* is disgusting."[3]

Mediums believe that in the entranced state they are possessed or controlled by the personality of some disembodied soul which acts or speaks by means of their organic and intellectual faculties. The term *medium* is of spiritistic origin, and arises from their fundamental but erroneous notion, that the psychic is an intermediary between living men and souls departed. More properly termed a "sensitive" or "psychic," a medium is defined as a person of a peculiar temperament, whose "subliminal or subconscious mind" is, in the trance state, more active and more easily exteriorized than other people's. As a sensitive, he is the channel through which some invisible and disembodied soul is supposed to make its presence and activity sensible to us; or again, as a psychic, he is the passive instrument of some soul departed which, taking possession of his body, usurps control of his sensitive and intellectual faculties. This spiritistic theory is, of course, contrary to Christian

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[3] *Recollections of a Busy Life* (Ed. 1869), p. 239.

philosophy, which maintains, as shall be seen in a later chapter, that the dead cannot by their natural powers manifest their thoughts to us, nor can we express our thoughts to them. If, then, all humanly-initiated communication between ourselves and disembodied souls be naturally impossible, we cannot concede that mediums have the power to evoke the dead for interchange of thoughts. If such transmission by a medium be a reality, it must be by other spirits, who being of a higher nature than the human soul, also possess superior powers.

To give a séance, the medium enters upon a trance, in which, while consciousness is lost, the will inoperative, and the normal mind quiescent, the "subconscious mind" exhibits a wondrous activity. In this abnormal state, he may perform very complex operations, which appear to be done by another person who acts, thinks, and feels within him in a manner all unknown to his reflective, or "conscious Ego." Thus entranced, his subconscious activity becomes manifest in an extraordinary degree. Ideas and sensations are associated, and externally revealed in hallucinations that are usually exteriorized through various movements.

It appears from many well-known experiments, that most mediums do not pass beyond this stage of hallucination, for in their normal or conscious state they really believe that when entranced they are controlled by some disembodied soul, and, as a conse-

quence, they subconsciously act out that belief by impersonating, and even mimicking the personage whom they imagine they embody. An illustration is the instance of Mrs. MacAllister Spencer, as reported in the *New York Herald*. When the experimenter whispered in her ear the name of a great composer, she suddenly extemporized upon the piano in the style of Mozart, being inspired, she said, by the spirit of the deceased artist. Entranced mediums have been always found keenly subject to suggestion.

Though usually the medium claims that the adventitious intelligence is the soul of a deceased person, such claim is not absolute. "I have," says Maxwell,[4] "witnessed the table call itself the devil, or even pretend to be a man still living . . . The manifest intelligence may personify God, the devil, angels, legendary personages, fairies, etc. The rôle played varies with the composition of the circle. It will always be the spirit of a dead or living person with spiritists. But the rôles are more varied if the circle be composed of people who are not spiritists; it then sometimes happens that the communications claim to emanate from the sitters themselves."

In the impersonation of disembodied souls most mediums may, by way of autosuggestion, become, as explained above, the subject of hallucination; yet cases may occur, wherein an external invisible agent

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[4] *Metaphysical Phenomena*, p. 52.

is at work; for, when a medium enters upon a trance, his normal or conscious mind becomes inactive, his will quiescent, and his sensitive and intellectual faculties passive and submissive, and, in consequence, he opens wide the door to spirit-agencies who, entering in unimpeded, take possession of his body, and use his natural powers as their own. Such a spirit's activity is, however, measured by the degree of passivity or submissiveness which he finds in the sensitive, or medium. Where this is complete, his activity being unrestrained, he exhibits himself as a distinct and separate entity with the symptoms of possession or obsession. To distinguish between the medium's hallucination that he is under the control of some disembodied soul, and the actual presence of an extrinsic spirit-agency, is a difficult task, and can be met only by examining the effects produced. When these transcend all the natural powers of the medium, and reach the preternatural, then only need we admit the presence of an invisible impersonating spirit, and examine into its true character.

The mediumistic trance when real and not simulated, seems still an unsolved enigma. How the invisible spirit agent operates to bring about the complete insensibility, by which the psychic becomes a submissive instrument in his hands, is wholly conjectural. Experts find it difficult to distinguish the spiritistic trance from the somnambulistic and hypnotic state; for, in many things it resembles both.

Generically viewed, it may be described as an abnormal condition artificially self-induced, and which, lying midway between the waking and sleeping state, exhibits suggestibility as its chief characteristic. If deep and complete, spiritistic manifestations develop rapidly; but if partial, or if its induction be resisted by some mental action of the psychic, the abnormal results are fitful, imperfect and often nil.

After long experience in Spiritism, J. G. Raupert, a Catholic author, writes that when a person submits to the trance only occasionally and perhaps not very willingly, both the induction of the state and recovery from it, are accompanied by some well-marked, and in some instances very repulsive manifestations.[5]

Such cases seem to verify the teaching of St. Ignatius. Subsequent to his conversion, he suffered long and severe temptations from evil spirits. Later, he left in writing for the guidance of others, certain conclusions, drawn from his own experience, by which good and evil spirits can be distinguished, according to their different modes of action in regard to men. A good spirit touches a virtuous soul, says the Saint, gently and sweetly, like drops of water entering a sponge; whereas an evil spirit touches it rudely and sharply, like water falling upon a rock. With the unvirtuous soul, however, the very contrary happens. The reason for this lies in the disposition

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[5] *Modern Spiritism*, p. 76.

of the person, which may be in opposition or not to the spirit that seeks admission.[6] In other words, when spirits find a medium friendly or well-disposed in submissiveness or passivity of mind, they enter quietly as into their own home; while, on the contrary, when the psychic is less well-disposed from some resistance, or want of passivity of mind, the spirit enters with more or less force, and this, as already noted, is often reflected in the contortions of the face and tremor of the medium's members.

The entranced medium, being *en rapport,* or in a special sympathetic relation with an impersonating spirit, exhibits a remarkable exaltation of sensitive and intellectual faculties, which enables him to display spontaneously either by word, or gesture, or by writing, greater knowledge than he had in his normal, or conscious state. On awakening from a trance, the medium oftentimes remembers nothing of what he said or did, but appears dazed, confused, bewildered, incoherent in thought, and in a lethargic state of mind, which sometimes continues through hours or days.

If the psychic be a well-developed "writing medium," he will seize a pencil, and scribble messages automatically, his hand, as he affirms, being moved by an extrinsic force, which acts independently of his own volition and direction. These messages con-

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[6] Vid. *Science of Spiritual Life,* p. 262.

vey the claim of emanating from the spirits of the dead, and often give information that transcends the conscious knowledge of the medium and of others of the circle. So perfect, says Hudson,[7] is this automatism in certain sensitives that, while writing long messages, which are characterized, not only by coherent thought, but also by more than ordinary intelligence, they will at the same time carry on an animated conversation with others of the circle, and on a subject entirely foreign to that of the message they are writing. Some have been known, he says, to write normally on one subject with the right hand, while with the left they automatically recorded a message on another topic, both purporting to be the work of spirits of the dead. "In fact, the intellectual feats performed by certain mediums so transcend belief, as to seem unworthy of credence were they not well-authenticated by the most severe scientific tests."

A seeming alteration of personality is a predominant feature of the mediumistic trance. A certain psychic, writes Grasset,[8] having evoked Napoleon's spirit, began to write messages at his dictation, and while thus writing spoke freely to others of the circle. But, abruptly throwing the pencil aside, his face pale, and his eyes fixed in a vacant stare, he stood erect, assumed a haughty and meditative air,

[7] *A Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life*, p. 57.
[8] *The Marvels Beyond Science*, p. 142.

and paced the room in the well-known attitude ascribed by tradition to the Emperor. Here the entranced medium in his subconscious mental activity had imagined his own personality to have been submerged into that of Napoleon's, and accordingly acted in harmony with his knowledge of that character. His condition was similar to those states of somnambulism which, accompanied with a seeming alteration of personality, are so accurately known and described by Charles Richet in *Artificial Somnambulism.*

Another example, cited by the same author, is that of the well-developed medium, Mlle. Couesdon. On one occasion, emancipating her subconscious self without an apparent effort, she changed her stress of voice and, assuming a deeper tone, spoke as if she were the physical personality of the angel Gabriel, addressing the circle in words suitable to such a noble spirit. Like all real mediums she erroneously considered her emancipated subconscious self a new individuality differing from that of her own normal, or conscious, self.

A more remarkable example was the trance activity of the famous medium, Mrs. Piper of Boston. Paul Bourget of Paris, a well-known student of abnormal conditions, whether hysterical, hypnotic, somnambulistic, or trance, had visited her to witness some of her subconscious activities. "She gets into a trance," he says, "with much more difficulty than other mediums." He writes of her: "She loosens

her hair, moans, twists her fingers, heaves deep sighs, and has contortions of her chest." Without subscribing to Mr. Bourget's false philosophy concerning man's multiplex personality, which shall be considered later when treating of the subliminal or subconscious mind, we continue the quotation:

> "When she is in a subliminal condition, Dr. Phinuit is embodied in her body, and replaces her own personality. He uses her organs and speaks through her mouth. Mrs. Piper considers her emancipated polygon [subconscious mind] which is acting with its own activity, to be the spirit of the deceased Dr. Phinuit. Besides, there are friendly spirits of whom Dr. Phinuit takes advice before speaking through Mrs. Piper's mouth. Sometimes some of them would not only inspire Phinuit, but take his place within the medium's body. Something strange now and then occurred: Phinuit spoke, during certain experiments, through Mrs. Piper's mouth, while another spirit was writing with the right hand of the same medium. Both hands of Mrs. Piper entranced, have been seen simultaneously writing, guided as they were, each of them, by a different spirit, whilst Phinuit used the voice of the same medium."

Mrs. Piper's erroneous belief that her diverse, simultaneous actions of speaking and writing with both hands, must be attributed to three spirits differing in personality, is refuted by the fact that when a man in a dream during ordinary sleep speaks, uses

both hands, and even walks, no one supposes him to change his personality by reason of such diverse and simultaneous actions; for one person, whether waking or sleeping, can at the same time perform all such diverse acts.

Mediumship, says Dr. Hudson, is not a natural, but an acquired, state. Since, however, it results from a morbid and abnormal condition of mind and body, it may by diligent cultivation be attained by anyone who deliberately yields up his body, with his free will, and sensitive and intellectual faculties, to an invading or controlling spirit. This fact is exemplified in the case of Mrs. Piper, as reported by J. G. Raupert. In a personal interview with that well-known medium, he learned that, when awakened with difficulty from her first trances, she felt sick and faint, and did not wish to continue the practise. But upon her father's insistence, she entered upon the trance state again and again, and later began to give private sittings to personal friends.

The attainment of perfect mediumship, says the same author, calls for long and patient efforts, in which is observed a strict obedience to the rules dictated by the spirits. They themselves encourage the medium's patient trials, promising wondrous phenomena in reward for his labor. In an eager desire for his passivity and submissiveness of mind, they have often, in disappointment, complained, that the absence of these qualities is a bar to their activity.

Degrees in mediumship arise from differences in the mental and physical constitution of subjects, and from the frequency of their experiments. In a person of a peculiar sensitive nature, whose will is weak, and whose mental faculties are not well-controlled, development will be rapid, because these defects result in a natural tendency to lapse into a passive state, in which one is more susceptible to spirit invasion. Others, however, who are strong in self-command, having a firm grip upon their will and mental powers, offer natural barriers, which by patient and strenuous labor must be gradually broken to a satisfactory degree. This applies especially to psychic or mental phenomena; for many scientific experimenters agree that, unless the mind of the medium, in perfect passivity, so suspends free and independent action, it is impossible for a spirit to communicate its message free from adulteration by the subconscious activity of the medium's own mind. This adulteration on the part of the medium and the impersonating spirit explains, say spiritists, the much nonsense, incoherencies, and contradictions found in messages purporting to come from invisible, extrinsic spirit-agencies. It is well instanced in the many laughable communications given out by "Feda," the supposed "control" of Sir Oliver Lodge's medium.

Real psychics belong in general to the neurotic class. Whether perfectly healthy persons can develop psychic powers remains a mooted question

among competent physicians. The Charcot School of hypnotism holds that the psychic condition is itself a disease, whilst the Nancy School has seemingly demonstrated that perfectly healthy persons may be thrown into that condition. The fact, nevertheless, remains that habitual indulgence in psychic practises invariably results in nervous derangement and disease.

Dr. Hammond, in his work entitled *Spiritism and Nervous Disorders*, has clearly exposed the relations between psychic conditions and nervous disorders. "They are always concomitant, and psychic activity may be either the cause or the result of nervous disease. They invariably accompany each other."[9]

To show that Dr. Hammond's conclusions are supported by eminent experimenters in Spiritism, Dr. Grasset quotes Pierre Janet as affirming that at first the generality of mediums, if not all, offer nervous phenomena and are neuropathic when not merely hysterical. Dr. Charcot has published an account of a whole family that became hysterical, owing to spiritistic habits. He establishes the reciprocal relations of hypnotism to mediumship, and affirms that in experiments in Spiritism which involve neuropathic phenomena one can in certain circumstances turn reciprocally through suggestion a fit of hysteria into a fit of Spiritism. Dr. Gilbert Ballet, a famous

[9] Apud Hudson's *A Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life*, p. 300.

neurologist and author of several treatises on the subject, has published his observations of persons who, having become spiritists after a séance, have been led into chronic delirium. One may say, concludes Dr. Grasset, that mediums belong to the neuropathic family, or, to be more precise, that the medium's trance is graphic, verbal, or gesticulating automatism.[10]

The conclusions of these scientific medical experts may seem extreme to those acquainted only with one or another medium who suffered no evident injury. But we are not here treating of professional mediums who practise forgeries. These of course are not affected as are the true psychists. Of these latter, Sir William Barrett, an expert, says: "As a rule I have observed the steady downward course of mediums who sit regularly." Among such psychics have been a few exceptions in persons of good health and of a robust constitution who, unlike the common-professionals, gave séances at longer intervals. Such was Dr. Hodgson, a physically powerful and exceptionally robust man. Yet, as he affirms, so great was the vital drain, that he occasionally had to postpone a sitting, because he had not sufficiently recuperated from the effects of the last séance.[11]

It is obvious that the dangers consequent to abnormal trance-activity are not less than those of the

[10] *The Marvels Beyond Science*, p. 141.

[11] Carrington, *Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, p. 357.

hypnotic state. Both are more or less identical. The undue cultivation of either, is apt to induce an habitual condition of mind, which is beyond the control of reason. A person cannot lapse frequently from the conscious to the subconscious life, without acquiring a certain facility, which, as a habit, becoming a second nature, will enfeeble his sane relation to the objective world about him. Moreover, the entranced medium, living in the subconscious, beyond the guidance of reason and free will, invites by his unresisting passivity of mind the entrance of wandering spirits, who may use his faculties as their own. The more the medium acquires this non-resisting passivity from frequent trances, the more he becomes subject to the invasion and control of these spirits, who at times, as examples show, assume permanent possession.

CHAPTER V

PHENOMENA OF SPIRITISM

IN CONSIDERING the phenomena of Spiritism, writers classify them according to their diverging points of view, as physical and psychical, or objective and subjective, or material and intellectual. Without vouching for their verity, we shall touch only upon such as are typical, and are recorded by eye-witnesses of repute in publications devoted to researches in Spiritism. Our brief survey excludes not only any present examination into their causes, but also whether they be real, or suppositional, or fraudulent. Questions so important require separate chapters. While many of the phenomena of the minor sort are common to ordinary mediums, the major or more surprising kind have been performed only by the most famous sensitives when operating in darkness or semi-darkness, and not a few have at one time or another been detected in trickery.

The simplest and most frequent phenomenon consists in the movement of material objects, as exhibited in the turning, or tilting, or levitation of a table, which is usually the initial stage of a séance. The sitters having formed a chain by placing their hands upon the table, the latter, under favorable conditions, begins a rotary movement, which sometimes continues after their hands have been uplifted a short distance

from the surface. The movement occasionally becomes quite rapid, the table after dancing about or rising a few inches, or remaining suspended for some moments, falls back on the floor. At Eusapia Palladino's séances, the table frequently rose from four to eight inches and rarely more than twenty-four. M. Flammarion, a noted experimenter, affirms that with all his strength he could not force the table back to the floor, and, while pressing upon it, he felt the sensation of floating on water or on some elastic fluid.[1]

There are, again, movements of objects without contact. Articles of furniture at a distance from the sitters move along the floor at a slow or a lively gait. Pictures torn from the wall are again replaced, and objects from the mantelpiece dart about in the air. Sir William Crookes at a séance of Mr. Home witnessed an accordion levitated in the air, which began to play without human touch, while floating about unsupported. A closed piano also produced music without visible contact.

Sometimes objects are carried, as it were, by invisible hands from one room to another, or from place to place in the séance room. For example, a glass half full of water, standing on a buffet out of reach of the sitters, was borne in complete darkness with great precision to the lips of persons present.

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[1] Vid. Liljencrants, *Spiritism and Religion*, Chap. II.

Flammarion reports that a guitar, self-lifted from the wall where it was hanging, approached the circle with great rapidity, and circling in its course, struck the forehead of one of the sitters, and then rested quietly on the table. The apparent passing of objects through solid substances has been reported at sittings. A snuff-box, a candlestick, a marble statuette, flowers, and other objects were brought into the séance room of Mr. Stainton Moses when the doors were securely closed. During Professor Zöllner's experiments with Mr. Slade, coins were taken out of securely closed and sealed boxes, and other things put into them. A table laid itself to rest under another table, and later, vanishing entirely from the room, returned from the ceiling.

Another remarkable phenomenon is the levitation of the human body. It was observed with such notable mediums as D. D. Home, Stainton Moses, and Eusapia Palladino. On three different occasions, Sir William Crookes witnessed the levitation of Mr. Home, once sitting in an easy-chair, once kneeling on a chair, and once standing on the floor. Experimenters more than once saw the same phenomena at séances with Mr. Moses. At one remarkable performance, he was lifted in his chair about twelve or fourteen inches from the floor, then, floating from the chair, he ascended higher, moving to the corner of the ceiling, after which he quietly descended to the floor.

Touches as of hands are often felt by sitters in the darkness of the séance. There are many variations, as gentle touches with the palm or fingers, pinching the ear or cheek, or pulling the hair or beard. Gentle caresses, however, are more frequent. The hands are at times large and robust as of a man, at other times smaller and softer as of a woman or of a child. Frequently the hand emerging from the curtain behind the medium extends so far as to touch first one then another of the company, caressing them, pressing their hands, gently pulling their ears, or clapping hands merrily in the air above their heads.

Sounds of various kinds are common phenomena of the séance room. Mysterious raps are of all degrees of loudness, from the slightest tap to blows like a sledge-hammer, and often in combination, as single, double, triple, and volleys, and sometimes in imitation of tunes and dances. Noises or footsteps are heard sufficiently heavy to shake the floor, or of a horse trotting, or of sawing the leg of the table, or of rubbing it or the walls with sandpaper. Raps do not always proceed from the table, but often from the floor or from objects in the room. Sir William Crookes says: "Actual contact is not always necessary. I have heard these sounds proceeding from the floor, walls and ceiling when the medium's hands and feet were held. I have felt them on my own shoulder and under my own hands. They are not

always heard on the object, but rather as if proceeding from within the same. They sometimes follow the gestures of the medium, as when Eusapia, her hands being held, imitated with her fingers the movement of playing on the tambourine, and the tambourine in the cabinet accurately responded." A circumstance worthy of notice is that these raps take on a distinctly intelligent character, answering, according to a code agreed upon, the questions asked by sitters, and often conveying information wholly unknown to anyone present. The raps, moreover, maintain consistently throughout many séances their fixed difference in degree and tone, as if to indicate that the invisible communicating agents were of different personalities.

Less frequent than raps are the production of musical sounds. In the séance room of Stainton Moses were heard a great variety, though no instruments were present. Four diverse forms were distinguished: the first, that of "fairy bells," which, like the tones produced by striking musical glasses with a small hammer, seemed to issue from within the wooden table; the second was the sound of a stringed instrument like the violoncello, and was heard only in single notes; the third was the sound of a handbell, ringing sharply to indicate the presence of a spirit, and was heard, as if issuing from the walls and ceiling; the fourth was the soft tune of a clarionet, gradually increasing in intensity until it

equalled the sound of a trumpet, then slowly diminishing, and dying away in a long-drawn-out melancholy wail.[2]

Another phenomenon is the production of diverse substances, such as fluids, scents, lights, and other objects. Mr. Charlton Speer relates that, at the séances of Mr. Moses, scents of various kinds, as musk, verbena, and new-mown hay, were frequently brought to the sitters. At times liquid musk was poured on their hands or handkerchiefs, or heavy breezes of perfume invaded the room.

Of more interest is the production of lights and luminous substances. There were, says Mr. Speer, two kinds of light produced at the sittings of Mr. Moses. One was objective and was perceived by all, the other, being subjective, was seen only by sitters of mediumistic temperament. The objective lights were like small brightly-shining globes, often moving rapidly about, but, strange to say, never illuminating any object in the room. Says the same writer:

> "It was a curious fact that when evoking on the top of the table, one could see a light slowly ascending from the floor, and passing out apparently through the top of the table, the latter offering no obstacle to one's view of the light. The subjective lights looked like large masses of luminous vapor floating around the room, and assuming a variety of shapes."

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[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 66.

Of similar lights which he observed under the strictest test conditions, Sir William Crookes writes:

> "I have seen a solid self-luminous body, the size and nearly the shape of a turkey's egg, float noisily about the room, at one time higher than anyone present could reach standing on tip-toe, and then gently descend to the floor. It was visible for more than ten minutes, and before it faded away it struck the table three times with a sound like that of a hard, solid body. During this time the medium was lying, apparently insensible, in an easy-chair."[3]

The most startling phenomenon is known as materialization. The possession of this power is the eager aspiration of psychics, but, exclusive of many fraudulent mediums, it seems to have been realized only in highly-developed sensitives. Apparitions proper to Spiritism are limited to what are claimed to be phantoms of souls departed. The expression "materialized spirit forms" must be understood according to the spiritistic theory of the nature of the human soul and its astral substance. The fact that a phantom is visible only to one sitter, and another to several, suggests the idea of hallucination. The supposed materialized spirits have a very human appearance, move about, speak, and at times allow themselves to be touched. Consisting now of a hand only, or now of an arm, or very rarely of a whole human body, they appear sometimes translucent or

[3] *Researches in Spiritualism*, p. 91

luminous, and at other times realistically lifelike. The experience of Sir William Crookes may serve as an illustration. He writes:

> "The hands and fingers do not always appear to me to be solid and lifelike. Sometimes, indeed, they present more the appearance of a nebulous cloud, partly condensed into the form of a hand. This is not equally visible to all present. For instance, a flower or other small object is seen to move; one person present will see a luminous cloud hovering over it, another will detect a nebulous-looking hand, while others will see nothing but the moving flower. I have more than once seen, first, an object move, then a luminous cloud appear to form about it, and lastly, the cloud condense into shape and become a perfectly formed hand. At this stage the hand is visible to all present. It is not always a mere form, but sometimes appears perfectly lifelike and graceful, the fingers moving and the flesh apparently as human as that of any in the room. At the wrist, or arm, it becomes hazy, and fades off into a luminous cloud."[4]

After materialization, spirit-photography is the most boasted phenomenon of Spiritism. In his *Dangers of Spiritism*, Mr. Raupert reproduces four spirit-photographs for the genuineness of which he vouches. In a later work he writes:

> "All really experienced investigators know that in the presence of certain sensitives and under

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

favorable conditions, photographs of materialized forms can be and have been obtained under circumstances that can leave no doubt on any reasonable mind. But what is perhaps of still greater importance in this connection is the record of the *progressive evolution* of the forms which some photographs exhibit in a very striking degree. White masses of material, surrounding and, in some instances, entirely enveloping and concealing the sitters, may thus be traced in various stages of development, manifestly aiming at, and in some instances culminating ultimately in the formation of a shape resembling the human form."[5]

On the other hand, Mr. Moses states that "out of some six hundred photographs which I have seen and examined, and of most of which I have heard the history, I do not know of half a dozen in which the expected form appeared."[6] In his able exposure of photographic frauds, Dr. H. Carrington remarks that few would probably deny the scientific *possibility* of spirit-photography on *a priori* grounds alone. If alleged materializations, apparitions, and kindred phenomena, can some day be established at all as undeniable facts, then we shall have reason to suspect that spirit-photography is possible.[7] If ectoplasm be a fact, then, of course, it can be photographed like other material objects.

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[5] *Modern Spiritism*, p. 66.
[6] Apud Liljencrants, *Spiritism and Religion*, p. 82.
[7] *Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, p. 210.

"Spirit-writing" is another phenomenon of the physical or material order. The various kinds may be classified under two heads, the direct and the indirect. In the latter, the spirits do the writing through an intermediary agent, whom they use as an amanuensis; but in the direct, the invisible operator, to all appearances, produces the script himself without the aid of a medium. With this form alone we are now concerned. In illustration we may cite Mr. Charlton Speer's experience at the séances of Mr. Moses. He writes:

> "Direct-writing was often given, sometimes on a sheet of paper placed in the center of the table and equidistant from all the sitters; at other times one of us would place his hands on a piece of paper previously dated and initialed, and usually a message was found, written upon it at the conclusion of the séance. We always placed a pencil upon the paper, but sometimes we only provided a small piece of lead, the result being the same in both cases."[8]

At another séance Dr. Speer placed a piece of ruled paper with a corner torn off for identification, and with it a pencil, on the floor under the table. When, after some time, during which irrelevant phenomena were occurring, the lights were turned on, the paper was found to contain a message written exactly along the ruled lines.[9] A remarkable example is that

[8] *Proceedings S. P. R.*, IX, p. 347.

[9] *Ibid.*, IX, p. 285, with facsimile of the message.

narrated by Sir William Crookes.[10] At the dark séance in which Katie Fox was the medium, he witnessed a luminous hand coming down from the upper part of the room, which, having taken the pencil from his hand, wrote on a sheet of paper on the table.

Slate-writing, originating with Mr. Slade, has become a common phenomenon at séances. It is often produced in broad daylight on an ordinary school-slate, or on the inside of a double slate fitted with hinges and lock. Of his experiment with Mr. Eglinton, a famous medium, Mr. S. J. Davey testifies:

> "I procured two ordinary slates at a stationer's shop, and these did not leave my posession during the séance. Messages with various styles were obtained, but the best test of all was when I put a crumb of pencil on the slate and then put another slate over that; holding the two slates together myself. I then asked if I should ever become a good medium. No sooner was the question asked than I heard the pencil within begin to move; and in a few seconds three small raps were heard, and when I removed the upper slate, I found the message written in a clear and good hand."[11]

In the perusal of these diverse types of phenomena, the reader may have noticed the ample opportunities afforded professional mediums for the exercise of fraudulent practises. In fact, famous prestidigitators,

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[10] *Researches in Spiritualism*, p. 93.

[11] Liljencrants, *Spiritism and Religion*, p. 86.

like Houdini, Maskelyne and Thurston, who deal purely in white magic, claim the ability to produce like phenomena under similar conditions. But we must not anticipate.

From the above distinctly physical or objective manifestations, in which the operating intelligence acts *outside* the bodily organism of the sensitive, we turn to others that are purely subjective. In these the operations are caused as from *within;* for the mind of the psychic is controlled and influenced in such a way as to become the medium of conveying automatically independent "spirit" communications. These subjective phenomena may be defined as internal, intelligent, and immediate manifestations of an occult agency directly expressed by the medium. They are internal, because the psychic does not receive the message from *without* through external sense perception, but from the spirit controlling from *within.* They are intelligent, because the message, written or oral, is coherent, and must, therefore, come from some intellectual agent. They are immediate, because, while the entranced medium is in an abnormal or unconscious condition, some other personality seems to take control of his faculties, and give out the message which, as the invisible agent claims, is that of a disembodied soul.

The first and most common form of communication, which originated at the very birth of modern Spiritism, is the so-called spirit raps. They indicate

an affirmative or negative answer according to the code agreed upon: three raps signifying "yes," and one, "no." A later method is a printed alphabet on which, while the medium passes a finger from letter to letter, a rap is heard to denote the one to be taken. Thus, letter after letter, the message is spelled out with great celerity.

A more satisfactory means of communication are "spirit-writing" and speaking, which are frequently exhibited at the séances of famous mediums. Oral messages, it is said, are sometimes uttered by the spirits, who, while the medium is in an unconscious state or trance, take possession of his vocal organs, and discourse on things of which he is ignorant.[12] In such instances they may speak unknown tongues, or announce events occurring at a distance, or read aloud the thoughts and sentiments of the sitters, or disclose secrets of the spirit-world. The more common, however, is automatic writing, which usually occurs in a trance when other personalities apparently control his body and employ his hand for writing. Sometimes with a mere pencil they scribble at a superhuman speed and minuteness, and often in a

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[12] A learned sceptic asks: "Is there on record a single instance of a medium speaking intelligently unknown tongues which he has never known even imperfectly? The question recalls the well-known case of Judge Edmond's daughter. She spoke fluently and intelligently in the French and Italian languages, of which she was ignorant in her normal state. The fact was attested by certain Frenchmen and Italians who were invited to test her powers. They found her speaking their native tongue as well as any countryman.

handwriting closely resembling the autography of the person whose spirit claims to be operating. The same effects are obtained by the planchette or similar instruments, which have come down to us from superstitious ages, but these we reserve for a separate chapter.

If it be said that automatic writing has been employed with like results by persons unentranced and quite apart from any séance, we reply by quoting certain conclusions reached by Mr. Hudson and others after long and careful study of the subject. To the objection that a psychic often produces phenomena while in a normal condition, he replies that such condition is often only apparent; for the trance condition of the medium is one and the same with hypnosis. Their difference lies, not in the condition, but only in the method of induction: that of the psychic is by autosuggestion; that of the hypnotic, by the suggestion of another. But there are, says Mr. Hudson, an indefinite number of degrees in trance as in hypnosis, which imperceptibly shade into each other, ranging from the apparently normal state to that of profound lethargic sleep. Thus Professor Bernheim was able to produce "all suggestive phenomena up to hallucination," while the subject was in the "waking condition," that is, in a condition which could not be distinguished from the normal by any ordinary test. The subject was, nevertheless, in a state of trance or hypnosis, as was demonstrated

by the very fact that he was under suggestive control. "In one case the Professor produced such a perfect state of insensibility to pain by mere suggestion—the patient the while being in a waking condition—that the application of Dubois Raymond's electrical apparatus, with the greatest current attainable turned on, produced no sensation whatever; although, as Bernheim remarks, the painful sensation thus produced is normally unbearable."

"It will thus be seen that the degree of hypnosis or of trance has no necessary effect upon the manifestations either in hypnotism proper, or in the psychic phenomena of Spiritism. Practise in each case seems to develop the suggestibility of the psychic, and his consequent ability to produce the various phenomena while in a condition apparently close to the normal."[13]

Stainton Moses, one of the most noted automatic writers, affirms that the various controlling spirits showed their individuality in handwriting, as well as in literary style. The more isolated he was and the more passive his mind, the easier were the communications. He could not command the writings, but had to follow the spirit-impulses. The ideas expressed in the script were often not only opposed to his own, but conveyed clear and definite information regarding things unknown to him. Spiritists believe

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[13] Hudson, *Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life*, p. 64.

that in automatic writing the disembodied soul controls the hand and brain of the psychic by means of an imaginary astral power, with which they suppose him to be charged.

Strange to say, leading spiritists admit, though regretfully, that deceiving spirits seek to play tricks upon their inquirers, and even to impersonate their dead relatives. In fact, scientific investigators have found so-called "spirit-writings," even when genuine, to be remarkable for their heterogeneous and conflicting nature. They exhibit but little wisdom in a flood of nonsense, a fondness for contradictions and falsehoods and for such intellectual triflings as will amuse or astonish. They seem, however, always ready to expound their "New Gospel" as soon as they have roused the doubting inquirer to a proper degree of curiosity and credulity. For seventy-five years spiritists have failed to meet the constant challenge to produce some message from the dead that serves a useful purpose. "Portfolios by the hundred," says Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J., "have been filled with automatic script; much of this has been printed in extenso, and not a little reproduced in facsimile. And yet we seem to have obtained nothing but a portentous mass of futilities and figments, which can be of no possible profit to anyone. The output is, in literal truth, such stuff as dreams are made on. It tells us nothing which adds to the sum of human knowledge, or, if it professes to impart information, the in-

coherencies, or inconsistencies with other approved records, are so manifest as to forfeit all confidence."[14]

A fact so manifest to all well-informed persons, appeared so formidable to Sir Oliver Lodge, that he concentrated his best energies upon the task of meeting it, at least in some tentative or specious form. Like other spiritists, he falls back upon the evasion that the cult is still a stripling, but that on arriving, after fuller experience, to a mature age, it will bring forth the desired results. But no stripling maturing after seventy-five years, can well play the baby-act. His evasion recalls that of the devotee of the Darwinian cult, who in reply to a challenge for a proof of the theory, said: "Oh, well! do not despair! Though we have searched the world over, and have not found the 'missing link,' yet I am sure that if the seas were emptied, we would find ever so many in ocean beds."

If we consider the luminaries of Spiritism, there is, on the one hand, the late Mr. Stainton Moses, an ex-Anglican minister, whose theological "spirit-writings" Sir Oliver Lodge highly approves; and, on the other, the eminent American jurist, Judge Edmonds, of the early 'fifties, whose spiritual revelations are on many points in flat contradiction. Surely, religious systems so inter-destructive cannot both be true. Yet both are supposed to emanate from the

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[14] *Month*, Vol. CXXXI, p. 248.

same spirit realm. Moreover, of the thousand questions concerning the unseen world, about which men are legitimately curious and anxious, and of which disembodied souls are certainly cognizant, not one, during its seventy-five years of existence, has modern Spiritism revealed to us in a manner verifiable this side of the grave. Such an empty story of its past is certainly prophetic of its future.

Before we leave the subject, Theosophy, Spiritism's half-brother, calls for some attention. Both are anti-christian cults, and both boast of like phenomena. So strongly Oriental is Theosophy, that in the popular mind it is usually confounded with Buddhism. But, says Mme. Blavatsky, its high-priestess, "Theosophists are no more Buddhists than musicians are all followers of Wagner." In recent times the cult has, like Spiritism, and for the same reasons already noted, been enjoying a revival, under the leadership of Mrs. Annie Besant, the successor of Mme. Blavatsky. Though both cults produce like phenomena, and are alike hostile to Christianity, both, nevertheless, are in strong opposition. Theosophy includes the magical, the occult, the uncanny, and the marvelous in every form. Mr. Sinnet, a theosophist, writes in the *Occult World*, that the Thibetan mystics and Mahatmas of India claim to inherit from immemorial times extraordinary psychic powers and an intimate acquaintance with transmundane spirits.

Theosophy rates itself superior to Spiritism. Of

the latter, Mme. Blavatsky says: "Spiritistic phenomena, but not their explanation, can be accepted; their theories are crude, and their bigotry is blind." Colonel H. S. Olcott and Mme. Blavatsky, once bright lights of Spiritism, abandoned it when they saw Eastern adepts equal and even surpass their phenomena, not in the darkness of the séance room, but in the broad light of day.

Most remarkable is the similarity of the phenomena of the two cults. In both are the same seeming independence of the laws of nature; the same transportation of material objects from afar, and their concealment where no mortal hand could have placed them; the same knowledge of what is taking place at a distance; the same showering down of roses, or of other flowers, and the same fluttering from the ceiling of letters from distant countries. In both are writings on slates or on walls, paintings emerging without the use of hands or brush, music resounding without musicians, and persons appearing or disappearing by materialization.

Now, if the philosophic principle be true, that like effects proceed from like causes, then the identity of the effects produced by spiritists and theosophists points to an identity of the producing causes. But, strange to say, while Spiritism ascribes its phenomena to the souls of the dead working through a medium, Theosophy attributes like effects

to the action of one of the "Mighty Brotherhood" in his astral body, or under some other form, through which he is enabled to project himself in a moment to the ends of the earth. This suspicious "Fraternity" is said to be at present chiefly resident at Thibet, and to include some of the most distinguished of the "Lamas." But a recent traveler in conversation with several of their Lamas, found that they laughed to scorn the notion of anyone among them possessing those marvelous powers, and hinted pretty plainly that the adepts who affirmed the existence of such beings, were imposing upon the credulity of the Western mind.[15]

Moreover, the Society for Psychical Research, which for decades had been investigating the phenomena of Spiritism, now turned its attention to those of Theosophy. It sent its expert, Doctor Hodgson, to India to examine at first hand their wondrous claims. After a three-months' stay, during which the Doctor investigated their phenomena with the greatest care, he sent his findings to the S. P. R. His report was so unfavorable and even "smashing," that the Society proclaimed its belief that the supposed phenomena were nothing but cleverly devised frauds produced by trickery from start to finish.[16]

If, then, after excluding all fraud, we find Spirit-

[15] *Month*, Vol. LXXIV, p. 333.

[16] Vid. Carrington, *Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, p. 16.

ism and Theosophy producing like phenomena, and alike, as antichristian cults, teaching doctrines subversive of the Christian religion, we have good reason to see in both, the same origin and the same agencies at work.

CHAPTER VI

AUTOMATIC WRITING

IT IS of common knowledge that from England came the superstitious craze which after the world-strife invaded America. Great numbers in our centers of population thronged to hear foreign lecturers expound the cult, and array it with a seeming scientific vesture. Abetted by the sensational press, these propagandists aroused the interest of multitudes of the non-religious world, who, with no polar star for guidance, turn to any novelty that stirs the curiosity or strikes the fancy. As a consequence, the superstitious practise of automatic, or "spirit-writing" by means of the planchette or ouija-board, became a popular mania, and even seized many unthinking Christians. Its presence led the Rev. Hubert Gruender, S.J., and several other eminent psychologists, to examine into the nature and cause of the widespread enchantment. His findings, set forth in an illustrated booklet,[1] shall be our guidance in the development of the subject.

To realize that the ouija-board is far from being a harmless toy, is to understand its workings. These have been shown by scientific experiments to consist of three forms, or stages. Of these the first and

[1] Gruender, S.J. (Professor of Experimental Psychology at St. Louis University), *Is the Ouija Board Dangerous?*

second will be considered in the present chapter. In the first stage the operator expects a definite answer to a given question, or is afraid that a certain answer will be given. His writing, though conscious, is involuntary; for the planchette moves apparently of itself and pulls his hand along. In fact, however, his hand pushes the planchette, and always toward those letters or signs which accord with his expectations and fears. This involuntary movement is due to what psychologists call "the motor power of images." If, for instance, we imagine a familiar movement of the body, if we recall how such a movement feels, or how it looks, or how it sounds, we form a mental image that tends to produce the movement itself; but as it is only a tendency, it can be checked by a contrary act of the will. The first beginnings of the movement occur, however, in spite of ourselves, and though they are so slight as to be unperceived under ordinary observation, the psychologist, nevertheless, can detect them with precision when under laboratory conditions he magnifies them by some suitable device. This device, which may appropriately be called a ouija-board in embryo, demonstrates that such initial movements occur, and, moreover, that they are not only due to the expectations of the subject experimenting, but also that as long as he persists in imagining the movements, he is powerless to check them by any effort of his will.

"An adaptation of the Chevreul pendulum—a

key swinging on a cord from a rod, will illustrate the unnoticed, unconscious influence of an idea on the body. Chalk a white circle on a table, and hold the rod with the key pendulum hanging over the center of the circle. Then look round and round the circle, thinking and imagining that the key will swing around it, but at the same time do not move the hand consciously. Soon the key will begin a slowly increasing orbit, and finally will freely swing around the chalked circle, exhibiting an instance of idea-force—the idea inclining (unconsciously) to the act—the image being the unconscious commencement of the act."

The physical reason for these phenomena is that all the sensory centers are connected by similar association-fibers with the motor area of the brain. This means that every sensory center is connected with those outgoing nerve fibers which lead from the motor area of the brain to the muscles of the hand, and such outgoing brain fibers are known as motor tracts. By their means the motor tracts of the body are roused to action whenever we want to perform some definite voluntary movement. But such movement, say of the hand, does not occur without the intervention of an act of the will, which act, however, does not suffice to bring about the movement. For, unless we know how a movement looks, or how it sounds, or how it feels, our will is powerless to execute the movement. In other words, images of our bodily actions are important factors of our actual voluntary movements.

The physiological incitement created by an image

in any one of these sensory centers of the brain, tends to discharge by way of the said associated fibers into the appropriate motor tracts of the hand, and the more so if the movement has been frequent in the past. For a neural groove, as it were, is formed, and along this groove the neural current tends to discharge into the motor tracts of the hand. But experience shows that we can prevent the actual discharge of this neural current by the voluntary control which we exercise over the movement of our hand. We can say, "I will not execute the movement," and as a result the gross movement does not occur. One thing, however, cannot be. If we persist in imagining the movement, we cannot prevent a slight discharge of the neural current into the accustomed tracts of action.

Thus far in regard to the initial movement; but in the case of the ouija-board, we must, furthermore, consider its gross movements, and these depend upon another condition. In the first stage of ouija-board writing, you can, as we have seen, check the gross movement of the hand by a deliberate and firm act of the will. But now, if you would reach the second stage of ouija-board writing, you must act to the contrary; that is, you must loosen the brakes by suspending the action of the will, and, in a passive state of mind, do nothing to prevent the suggestion of a definite movement having its full sway.

From the quiescent will and passive mind arises

the real danger of the ouija-board. In our normal state we control the movements of our body, and refuse to become the victim of every capricious suggestion that comes to our mind. But the board, in fact, will not work unless we yield up the rational and voluntary mastery of our hand, and the more passive and lethargic we become, the more readily will it work. Now, all the movements of the hand in automatic writing are idea-motor actions, so-called in opposition to our normal voluntary actions, and they are made possible by the fact that the operator surrenders his highest prerogative—the voluntary control which by right he should exercise over the movements of the body.

With such surrender, the operator gradually reaches the second stage of automatic writing. He then writes not only involuntarily but unconsciously, and, if in an advanced state of passivity and mental lethargy or trance, he communicates thoughts that exist only in his "subconscious mind," and which he would not reveal in his normal or conscious condition—thoughts, again, concerning his own inner life and his relation to others that, mayhap in the conscious state, would bring the blush of shame.

This becomes clear if we consider the nature and contents of the subconscious mind. Though reserving its treatment for a later stage, it will now suffice to note that it is a mental reservoir wherein by memory are preserved our human experiences. From

the dawn of intelligence, our feelings or emotions, occurrences, and sensory or intellectual actions of our inner, as well as of our outer, life, are on record in the secret recesses of that subconscious mind.

As the subconscious mind plays an important part in the explanation of both natural and preternatural phenomena of Spiritism, it is well to pause awhile upon the true meaning of the conscious and subconscious mind. We reject the false philosophy of certain writers who predicate of man a dual personality and a dual mind, the one conscious and the other subconscious, or subliminal. As man has but one soul, he can have but one mind. If his intellectual action is at one time conscious, and at another subconscious, that does not indicate two different minds, but only two different states of the one and the same mind. When we call man's cognoscitive faculty "intellect," or "understanding," or "reason," or "mind," or "memory," we but note various aspects of the one and the same spiritual faculty. In like manner, when we speak of man's conscious and subconscious mind, we merely express a distinction between the modes of activity on the part of the same faculty. All the thoughts, images and sensations which are explicitly attended to, as in our wakeful activities, are ascribed to our conscious mind; but others which are unnoticed or but slightly so, are predicated of the unconscious mind, which is also called "subliminal." The latter is well exemplified

in man's mental activity in dreamland during sleep, or in the trance or hypnotic state. Thus correctly understood, we use for convenience the terms "conscious" and "subconscious mind" throughout the present work, always insisting that man has but one mind, the action of which may at one time be conscious and at another time unconscious.

Most of the treasures of the subconscious mind are lost to our normal, or conscious memory, but under abnormal conditions when consciousness and self-mastery are suspended, as in hypnosis or trance, the subconscious mind, no longer repressed, leaps into wondrous activity, and discloses the long-forgotten riches of its treasure house. All may be brought to light again just as truly as a phonographic record may reproduce its treasured story.

In illustration we cite the following classic example often quoted by experimental psychologists:

> "In a town in Germany, a young woman who could neither read nor write, was seized with fever, and in an unconscious state was heard speaking Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Whole sheets of her ravings were written out, and were found to consist of sentences intelligible in themselves, but having slight connection with each other. Of her Hebrew sayings only a few could be traced to the Bible, and most of them seemed to be in the Rabbinical dialect. All trickery was out of the question; the woman was a simple creature; there was no doubt as to the fever.

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> "At last the mystery was unveiled by a physician, who in tracing back the girl's history discovered that at the age of nine she had been charitably taken into the home of an old Protestant pastor, a great Hebrew scholar, where she lived till his death. Further inquiry revealed that for years it had been the old man's custom to read aloud to himself from his book while walking up and down a passage of his house into which the kitchen opened. These books were ransacked, and among them were found several of the Greek and Latin Fathers, together with a collection of Rabbinical writings. In these works so many of the passages taken down at the young woman's bedside were identified that there could be no reasonable doubt as to their source."

This young woman's involuntary and subconscious talking is a clear case of the second form of ouija-board writing, under substantially the same conditions. There is a brain record of experiences which never reached the focus of conscious attention; there is the abnormal lethargic condition of the operator of the ouija-board, made habitual by long-continued dabbling in the mysterious; there is the motor power of images and the neural current discharged into the motor tracts, which lead in one case to the muscles of the vocal organs, and in the other to the muscles of the arm and hand.

In the first and second stages of automatic writing, there is no necessity of supposing the presence

of a preternatural agent. The answers of the ouija are but the echoes of one's own conscious or subconscious expectations or fears, or silly thoughts and fancies, or of things which have been read and long forgotten, and perhaps even curses or horribly indecent language, causing the greatest possible amazement—all bubbling up from life's hidden sea, and at times exposing secret traits indicative of the operator's character. But as long as the revelations contain nothing that lies beyond the mind of the writer, there appears no solid reason for assuming the action of an outside intelligence.

It should, however, be noted that in this second stage, an automatic writer sometimes claims to be actuated by the independent personality of the disembodied soul of some deceased friend or relative; and especially is this the case when in conscious mind he believes himself a possible medium for such communication, and by autosuggestion conveys this belief to his subconscious mind. This is well exemplified in what is known as the Glastonbury mystery. A book published at Oxford in 1918 by Frederick B. Bond, Director of Excavations, Glastonbury Abbey,[2] aroused keen interest. The author was highly concerned with occultism, and his associate, J. A. Bartlett, was a confirmed automatic writer. Both were saturated with the literature bearing on the

[2] *The Story of a Psychological Experiment which resulted in the Discovery of the Edgar Chapel at Glastonbury.*

story of Glastonbury Abbey, and agreed to use the planchette as an aid in their proposed exploration. In excavations made, they discovered the foundations at the east end of the choir to correspond in all respects to the indications of the automatic script which, they said, contained communications from the spirits of the monks of old at Glastonbury.

As regards the simple fact of the discovery of the Edgar Chapel, I can see, says Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J.,[3] no reason for invoking the action of any supramundane intelligence. Both Mr. Bond and Mr. Bartlett, being well acquainted with all the literature upon the subject, were duly impressed with the fact that the present ruins of the Abbey Church were some eighty or ninety feet short of the length assigned to the building in the sixteenth century. As a consequence, they drew the inference consciously or subconsciously, just as Warner and other writers had drawn it before them, that there must have been formerly, at the east end, a big chapel of which no trace now remains above ground. Small wonder, then, that in their automatic script the knowledge and impressions they possessed revealed themselves, and were further decorated—through what, for want of a better term, is called "the dream faculty"—with the more or less fantastic embellishments usual in such cases.

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[3] *Month*, Vol. CXXXI, p. 249.

Their inference was perfectly sound, and indeed obvious. They dig, and the foundations are discovered, as anticipated, to fit in fairly well. But beyond the central fact of the discovery of the foundations of the Chapel, some eighty or ninety feet and of proportionate width, hardly any of the details written down rest upon any reliable evidence.

Furthermore, the pseudo-archaic English of the script in question, is such as was not in use in the days of the monks at Glastonbury, nor such as any spirit impersonating them would ever speak unless he wished to defeat his own purpose. In fact, it is English, says Father Thurston, which no generation of men dwelling in these islands ever spoke. It is, however, the sort of English—a hotchpotch—we might imagine a very careless and ill-trained student of our early literature to use in his dreams if he believed himself called upon to address Henry VIII or Cromwell in the current language of that period.

But, most of all, the language of the supposed spirit-monks concerning the domestic affairs of the Community, and especially about their *Pater Nosters*, is to every Catholic absolutely impossible of comprehension. Any supposed spirit-script, couched in language which is in itself an obvious sham, cannot gain credence with well-informed men. The book, however, imposed upon a great number who had neither time nor inclination to examine critically the truthfulness of the story.

We have quoted the incident at length, because it is an unusually excellent example of the second stage in automatic writing. The revelations made did not transcend the knowledge in the subconscious minds of the operators, and the odd language used was the product of their imagination. Like many whose honesty is not impugned, they simply believed the writings of their subconscious minds to be the dictation of some fancied spirit agent. Such delusion is not uncommon with devotees of the ouija-board. Many books have been published and heralded in all honesty as the direct work of certain disembodied souls who in earthly life had attained preeminence in literature, but on critical examination all showed the same marvel—the incredible and impossible deterioration of the disembodied spirit after its entrance upon a higher and immaterial existence. Such books, nevertheless, serve a good purpose: they offer us indubitable evidence of the credulity of ouija-board victims.

We may note here by way of summary the perils which, according to eminent authorities, the habit of automatic writing in its second stage sometimes brings upon experimenters. The first arises from the state of mental passivity which is usually a condition for successful writing. It requires the surrender of one's highest prerogative—the voluntary control of bodily movements. Man's plain duty is to preserve his rational liberty, by which he masters

his voluntary actions, and saves himself from the slavery of every passing whim and fancy. Mental passivity, even in its mildest form, implies the weakening of one's will power. At first it may be only a condition similar to a listless day-dream; but, growing by degrees, it assumes a serious form, something akin to hypnotic trance, in which with consciousness and free will in a temporary total eclipse, one offers unimpeded access to invisibly-roaming spirit agencies.

The second danger is manifest in the probability of the operator blurting forth his most secret thoughts, suspicions, temptations and other things, which at any cost he would not divulge in his conscious state. He is helpless in this regard; for his subconscious mind, no longer restrained by his free will, now held in abeyance, leaps into action, and, as in dreams, discloses haphazardly his most secreted thoughts, actions, foolish fancies, evil temptations, and in fact anything which has through the sensory or intellectual faculties been impressed, even involuntarily, upon his mind. Such revelation even of secret, wicked things does not, of course, necessarily imply any guilt on the part of the operator; for, at semi-subconscious moments, they may have stolen their way into his mental treasury, and at every conscious appearance have been suppressed or rejected. A patient, under the influence of ether on the operating table, is in a like condition: his consciousness is lost, and his subconscious mind, unrestrained, throws out

foolishly all sorts of things. His condition is certainly excusable by reason of a painful operation; but no manipulator of the ouija-board can be justified in exposing himself to such dangers. How many automatic writers have blushed when confronted with their ouija-board revelations?

There is, moreover, a graver danger in the likelihood that those revelations of secret suspicions, insinuations, and other worse things may bring untold harm to others. You may protest loudly to your friends and relatives that you never wilfully harbored those thoughts, nor ever believed them true; but they are not experimental psychologists. Like yourself they place great confidence in the ouija-board, and now, in spite of protests, they point to your own secret condemnation. What you have unwittingly written is written; the truth is out. In fact, on the testimony of numerous experimenters, we know that the ouija-board has brought grief to many an honest soul, and disrupted many a family circle.

The third danger of the ouija-board arises from the powerful influence which the preternatural commonly wields over the minds of men. The mysterious possesses a certain charm which attracts and fascinates. In ignorance of the mystery of the board, many indulge in its use more and more, and thus engender a habit which in fine becomes irresistible. Like the tippler who must have his tipple, and the dope-fiend who must have his dope, they must have

their ouija in spite of its inherent danger. Arguments with such victims prove useless.

Furthermore, in ignorance of the laws of the subconscious mind, such automatists come to place full confidence in the written revelations of the toy; and, as it often reproduces whatever they have seen or heard or read against their religion, they are sometimes known to feel a gradual weakening of their faith, with a consequent neglect of religious practises.

A fourth peril lurking in the ouija-board is often the gradual but certain undermining of one's health. It its first beginnings this danger is less apparent; but, with an ever-increasing frequency in the use of the board, it sometimes grows by degrees into a form of brain-storm; the operator in many cases can successfully manipulate the board only when he submerges his free will and conscious self, and brings into action his subconscious mind, and this is a brain condition which is essentially abnormal, and unhealthy. Where is the man of sane mind who by the use of anesthetics would willingly forego his consciousness every day or several times a day? Yet this is precisely what the devotee of the ouija-board must ordinarily do if he would succeed in automatic speaking or writing. To such victims the images of the words spelled out become at times so vivid as to amount to real hallucination, in which they hear the voice of some mysterious agent, as it were, dictating the message. Under an ever-recurring and irresisti-

ble impulse, they work the planchette overtime, and in many cases, as experience testifies, become ripe for the insane asylum. This fact has been emphasized by many men eminent in science and in the medical profession, who have uttered serious warnings against the ouija mania. In regions where it became contagious, remedial legislation was invoked to stay its progress.

A priest with whom the author was well acquainted, communicated privately his strange experience with the ouija-board to several clergymen. Impressed, he said, by the mania then prevailing, he determined to discover for himself the cause of the senseless fascination. He began, for the sake of diversion, to manipulate the ouija for a time each night before retiring. After a while he perceived that some invisible intelligence was gaining an influence over him even to sensible control. This fact caused him to break off all further use of the instrument. A few nights later he found an unaccountable impulse to resort again to the ouija-board. Adhering, notwithstanding, to his firm resolve, he conquered the temptation. But after retiring that same night, he soon heard a strange racket. The ouija had leaped from its place to the floor, and on reaching the bedside by a series of jumps, placed itself squarely upon his chest. In great surprise he rose and replaced it on the mantlepiece. But after an interval of some ten or more minutes, the ouija went through the same perform-

ance a second time. These repeated actions roused the priest to realize the situation, and in dread, rising hurriedly, he threw the board through the open window far out into exterior darkness, where it was found the next morning shattered upon the flagstones in several pieces. That ouija, exhibiting a thing of itself impossible—life and well-directed action, was, he saw, manifestly animated by some invisible agent. That mysterious performance was a powerful caveat against any further tampering with that innocent-looking instrument.

Between the second and third stage of automatic writing, in which, it is said, there is actual communication with some unseen intelligence, exists no visible line of demarkation. The habitual operator passes from one to the other in a transition that is known only by the presence and activity of an invisible preternatural agent. The presence of such agents will form the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER VII

THE OUIJA-BOARD AND THE PRETERNATURAL

FROM the first and second stage of automatic writing, we turn to the third and most dangerous form—dangerous, because at this stage there usually enter certain invisible intelligent agents. It has two grades which, differing only in their methods, attain the same effect. As these are the principal methods of communication by means of the ouija-board, planchette, or other instruments, it is of no small importance to examine the real teaching and practise of spiritists concerning them. In their exposition we shall follow Sir Oliver Lodge, who is to-day the acknowledged grand-master of the spiritistic cult.[1]

In the first method the medium whose hand is being used, seems to be in a submerged or dream-like state. The hand, says Sir Oliver, is probably worked by its usual physiological mechanism and guided and controlled by nerve centers which are not in the most conscious and ordinarily-employed region of the brain. When the message turns out to be of evidential value, it is presumably because the writer's subconscious mind is in touch with some invisible

[1] *Raymond*, p. 355.

intelligence. Proof of such communication is, however, absolutely necessary; but experience has demonstrated that now and again sound proofs have been forthcoming.

The second method, says Sir Oliver, is more effective. In it the automatist goes into a trance, and becomes comprehensively unconscious. In that state the physiological mechanism is more subject to control, and the message is less colored, or distorted, or interpolated by the normal intelligence of the medium. But the messages, if oral, must be written down by another person; for in such cases, the medium, on awakening from the trance, is ignorant of what he uttered during his unconscious state. In these instances speech is as common as writing, probably more common, because less troublesome to the friend or relative to whom the messages are thus sent. The spirit communicating during trance, may be the same as the one operating the hand outside the trance state, and the messages may have the same general character as those got in automatic writing when consciousness is not suspended, but only held in temporary abeyance.

In the trance state, a dramatic characterization, continues Sir Oliver, is usually imparted to the proceedings by a spirit called a "control," who, possessing the body of the medium, works his faculties as his own. This new personality is believed by some to be merely the subconscious mind of the entranced

medium now dramatized into a sort of dream existence. By others it is taken for a more or less pathological phenomenon, known to physicians and psychiatrists as a case of dual personality. By others, again says Sir Oliver, it is believed to be in reality the separate invisible intelligence which it claims to be.

Notwithstanding these different opinions, it is, thinks Sir Oliver, universally admitted that the *dramatic semblance* of the controlling spirit is undoubtedly that of a separate person—a person asserting his permanent existence in the spirit-world, where he claims to be occupied in much the same functions as the medium is in this life; for, the transmission of messages seems to be his special work. The dramatic character of most of the "controls" is so vivid and self-consistent that whatever any given sitter or experimenter may feel is the probable truth concerning their real nature, the simplest way, remarks Sir Oliver (injudiciously), is to humor them by taking them at their face value, and treating them as separate, responsible, and real individuals—even though we have no absolute proof of their identity.

Such indeed is the fallacious practise of spiritists. But in real life, men of wisdom do not thus trust men of doubtful and probably fraudulent character, nor rest satisfied to take them at their face value. On *a priori* principles no Christian may assume such impersonating spirits to be the souls of the dead. Sir Oliver, furthermore, compromises Spiritism when he

says: "It is true that in the case of some mediums, especially when overdone or tired, there are evanescent and absurd intrusions every now and then which cannot be seriously regarded; and for anyone to treat them as real people would be ludicrous."

But Sir Oliver fails to state by what law or criterion a sitter may distinguish an "evanescent and absurd intrusion" of a tricky or mischievous spirit from a real and serious one, or how he may tell a lying from a truthful spirit. Nevertheless he continues: "Each serious controlling spirit shows a character and personality and memory all its own, and appears to carry on as continuous an existence as any man whom we meet in conversation." But, we ask, cannot any masquerading spirit of evil do the same? Furthermore, says Sir Oliver, these controlling spirits can take up a previous conversation at the point where they left off, and remember remarkably well all that was said before, while another spirit operating through the same medium will naturally and properly repudiate any knowledge of it. But this circumstance does not prove what Sir Oliver obviously takes for granted, that such communicating spirits are disembodied souls. They may as well be evil spirits impersonating human souls.

"So clearly," continues Sir Oliver, "is the personality of the 'control' brought out in the best cases, and so clear are the statements of the communicating spirits, affirming that the 'control' who is kindly trans-

mitting their messages, is a real person, that I am disposed to admit their assertion, and to regard a controlling spirit, when not a mere mischievous and temporary impersonation, as akin in the spirit world to the person whom in ours we call a 'medium'."

These words of Sir Oliver seem to indicate why spiritists, always very credulous, are ready to believe without proof the claims and assertions of unidentified invisible spirit-agencies, who in many cases are known to be mischievous and deceptive. He, however, in greater wisdom and prudence sees reasons for doubting the personality of "Feda," the supposed soul of a deceased Indian maiden, who serves as the "control" for his son Raymond. But most spiritists are not troubled with such doubts, and their unsophistication makes them good grist for the mills of charlatans, quacks and mountebanks.

In describing the regular process of automatic communication, Sir Oliver alleges that, apart from the sitter who asks questions and listens to or reads the answers, there are normally three intelligences at work. First, the spirit communicating the message; secondly, the intermediary spirit, called the "control," who accepts the message, and in the obsession of the entranced medium uses his organs or faculties for the transmission; and, thirdly, the medium himself—a passive agent, by whose voice or hand the message is conveyed to the sitters.

For the presence of these three intelligences, Sir

Oliver offers no reason, but simply takes the sole word of professional mediums. It seems, however, unreasonable to call for two spirits where one suffices. Both the principal spirit and the intermediary have the same power of communication and need only a befitting medium. This fact is affirmed by Sir Oliver himself when he says that the principal spirit sometimes takes control and, without any intermediary spirit, speaks or writes in his own name and person. Nevertheless, it is, we see, very serviceable for these invisible agents to impose upon their clients the happy fiction that the presence and activity of two distinct spirits are commonly necessary for communication. Such a fiction allows the one and sole spirit in action to hide behind the other chimerical intelligence when detected in falsehood. Many such instances have been known at séances. The blame in every case is put either upon the principal spirit, who did not convey his message clearly to the controlling spirit, or again upon the "control," who did not fully understand it, or could not transmit it properly on account of the imperfection of the medium.

To this imaginary triple complex action in transmitting messages, eminent spiritists ascribe the difficulty, nay, even the impossibility of determining how much is veridical in any given spiritistic revelation. Indeed, Sir Oliver himself admits the grave danger of what he naïvely calls "sophistication." Granting a message to be genuine, it is always liable, he says,

to be colored, or modified, or distorted, or mayhap perverted, in the course of transmission, not only by the preconceived notions or mannerisms of the supposed "control," but also by ideas latent in the subconscious mind of the medium or sitters. This is seen verified in "Feda," the supposed "control" of Mrs. Leonard. Her messages were often filled with silly prattle, which the sons of Sir Oliver considered mere ludicrous inventions, and he himself in an apologetic spirit wrote: "A good deal of this strikes me as nonsense, as if 'Feda' had picked it from some sitters, but I went on recording what was said."[2]

Hence, on the confession of the most eminent spiritist, we can never be certain how much of a spiritistic message is due to the invisible intelligences, either principal or intermediary, and how much to the subconscious mind of the medium and sitters. This granted, is it not insensate folly for spiritists to accept unquestioned the revelations of invisible and unidentified agents even when free from contradiction. More serious still, is the fact admitted and regretted by eminent spiritists, that sitters seeking intercourse with the dead are apparently at the mercy of troops of freakish or impersonating spirits who deliberately set out to mislead. "Silly spirits," says "Feda", "who want to have a game."

Mr. Stainton Moses, a great luminary of Spiritism,

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[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 269.

wrote extensively on the difficulty of unmasking these impersonating spirits, who from mischievous design or from sportive fun frequent circles, counterfeit manifestations, assume names, and give erroneous and misleading information.[3] The testimony of Mr. Moses has been confirmed by the experience of many leaders of the cult, including Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Conan Doyle, who all admit the foolish nature of many spiritistic messages and the absolute falsehood of others. These admissions lead us to conclude that it seems almost impossible to get away from an atmosphere of downright deception at séances. The fact, though puzzling to spiritists, bears in itself a solution as clear as day to every Christian.

A good example of the preternatural in the third stage of the ouija-board writing appeared as recently as June the 8th, 1923, in the Oscar Wilde script. In as much as it is still discussed in London circles, and in the public press, and in fact has become famous, it is well to dwell upon it briefly. The circumstances which differentiate it from all other "spirit-writings" give it a special significance; for, says Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J., an expert critic, "I can read the Oscar Wilde script, and read his works and his life, and also I can study his handwriting in his own preserved manuscripts, and compare it with that produced by the medium." As Father Thurston has done all this,

[3] *Spirit Teachings*, p. 243.

and, moreover, is personally acquainted with several of the automatists concerned, we shall follow him closely in his critical essay in *Studies,* of March, 1924, in which he gives us the result of his labors.

A gentleman who is still known as "Mr. V.," after laboring in vain for some time to develop the power of automatic writing, sought the help of a lady well known for her long experience in psychic research. Mrs. Travers Smith is the daughter of the late Professor Dowden, of Trinity College, Dublin. When at the sittings she laid her hand on Mr. V.'s, while he held the pencil, it began to write intelligent messages which purported to come from the spirit of Oscar Wilde. As the messages continued, says Mrs. Travers Smith:

> "I looked at Mr. V.; his eyes were closed and he seemed quite unconscious of what he was doing. I took my hand off his for a few moments: the writing ceased at once, the pencil tapping on the paper impatiently. I put my hand on again and the message continued. It was written so rapidly that it was entirely impossible for me to follow it, and the hand of Mr. V. was so firmly controlled that I found it very difficult to move it from the end of one line to the beginning of the next."[4]

The script has a distinct literary quality and contains many flashes of vivid descriptions which are characteristically Wilde's. For example: "Soon the chestnuts will light their candles and the foxgloves

[4] *Psychic Science,* Vol. II, p. 205.

flaunt their dappled drooping bells." Or again: [Few now] "can hear the flute voice of beauty calling on the hills, or mark where her white feet brush the dew from the cowslips in the morning." Moreover, the automatic script contains actual quotations from Wilde's *De Profundis*, such as, "twilight in my cell, and twilight in my heart," and again: "There is not a single color hidden away in the chalice of a flower, or the curve of a shell, to which, by some subtle sympathy with the soul of things, my nature does not answer." Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J., writes:

> "The startling resemblance of the script to Wilde's flamboyant and ornate prose, made a deep impression which was reinforced by another surprising circumstance—the handwriting, though rapid and intense, closely resembled Wilde's plays and poems. The British Museum possesses the original manuscripts of some of Wilde's plays and poems. I have consulted these, and there can be no possible question as to the close resemblance between the two, or indeed of the fact that the script aims at reproducing Wilde's handwriting."[5]

There is much in the Wilde script of a serious nature, in the form of extravagant self-pity and of lamentation over his present hapless condition. He declares that, "like Achilles, in Homer, I would sooner be the poorest ploughman on earth than lord

[5] *Ibid*, p. 17.

of all the astral realms." "When we come to you," he tells his automatist, "it is as poor stowaways, uninvited guests, who must perforce wait in the back rooms while the rightful owner makes merry in the lighted halls." His language at times suggests a condition of things like that of the "unclean spirit that is gone out of a man, and which walketh through places without water, seeking rest."[6]

The messages of the supposed Oscar Wilde are clearly influenced by the range of knowledge and interests of each medium. With Mr. V., who is a mathematical and scientific lecturer, the script gives many allusions to astronomical and botanical names and facts; with Mrs. Travers Smith, the messages assume a more literary atmosphere; with her daughter, who is an artist, they give a tirade against Whistler. Nevertheless, a large infusion of very vivid imagery appears in all the scripts independently of the particular medium.

A remarkable passage occurs in the Wilde script which, says Father Thurston, would not be out of place in a mission sermon, descriptive of the worm of conscience as it preys upon the imagination of the lost. We deem it indeed remarkable because so contradictory to the many supposed spirit messages which commonly picture the abode of disembodied souls as "Summerland" where all are happy. The passage follows:

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[6] *Luke* xi, 24.

"A stage is set, and to the hollow music of the drums of doom, masked puppets, in horrible mimicry, play before us the drama of our lives. Missed opportunities press their invoking faces close to us. Half-forgotten, long dead things crawl from their graves and gibber at us—slow creeping things, trailing dreadful slimy shrouds. Desire stoops over her ashes and with scorched hands seeks to fan up the old flames. Death and Old Time look on and mock her with blackened grinning skulls. When she sees them she creeps wearily away. Remorse, a gaunt vulture, red-eyed and leprous-winged, watches from the air."[7]

Some of the script, says Father Thurston, has evidential value. For example, when the supposed Oscar was asked to recall early memories, the hand wrote down among other things:

"McCree, no, that's not the name; Glencree, where we stayed with Willie and Iso, and there was a good old man who used to look after our lessons; a priest, Father Prid, Pridean."

No one present, it seemed certain, knew anything of Oscar's sister Isola, who died as a child, nor was there anything to suggest any connection between the Wilde family and Glencree. But later, upon investigation, the facts mentioned in the message were verified. Even so, a sceptic will probably ask—May not the whole thing be a fake? Would not a clever man, if he set himself to the task, find it very easy to

[7] *Occult Review*, Nov., p. 272.

obtain beforehand a few details, and such names as Glencree and Pridean, and Isola, Oscar's little sister, and, furthermore, to study Wilde's peculiar style from his published works, and to memorize certain passages therefrom, and also to practise his handwriting from manuscripts still extant?

In reply, such an elaborate mystification seems wholly improbable for three reasons: first, because in view of the amount of script obtained through Mr. V., and the rapidity with which it comes—3,000 words an hour—the effort of memory would seem a feat so astounding as to preclude its possibility; secondly, because of the difficulty of foreseeing the many questions asked and of providing Wildean answers beforehand; and thirdly, and not the least, because Mrs. Travers Smith, unassisted, obtains script through the ouija-board, which also purports to come from Oscar Wilde, and is in his handwriting and peculiar style. If, then, the script be authentic in the sense that it has been produced without deception on the part of the medium, a point beyond question, for Sir William Barrett and Father Thurston, who are well acquainted with Mrs. Travers Smith, absolutely vouch for her honesty, it remains to consider whether the author of the script is the disembodied soul of Oscar Wilde, as he claims, or of some masquerading spirit. Of his claim we shall treat in a later chapter when dealing with the identification of these communicating spirits.

"Undoubtedly," concludes Father Thurston in his critical essay,

> "there are mysteries in this matter of automatic writing which our psychology has not yet fathomed. That the subconscious mind of the medium is responsible for a great deal, both as to the form and matter of what is written, cannot, I think, be questioned. At the same time, no theory of cryptæstheia or extended telepathy seems to me adequate to explain all the facts. I cannot persuade myself that any theory is admissible which does not postulate the interference of some outside intelligence, of a spirit, or spirits in fact, influencing powerfully the mind of the medium. From this it would undoubtedly follow that the phenomena of automatic writing establish the existence of something outside and beyond this material world."[8]

How senseless, then, is the position of those who insist on ascribing to natural causes alone, the well-authenticated facts of "spirit-writing." They attribute to a piece of dead, dried wood under human touch, mental activities far superior to their own. Point out to such a man some inert matter, whether a lump of clay or a piece of dead wood, and ask him to touch and question that inert and lifeless thing. Perhaps at his voice and touch that solid substance will suddenly take on life, exhibit a wondrous intellectual activity, converse intelligently, exchange

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[8] Apud *Studies*, Mar., 1924, p. 28.

ideas, answer unuttered questions, and disclose unseen distant events. Let him not despair! If it does not understand his English, let him question it in Spanish, French or Italian; for the ouija or planchette knows all foreign languages. No doubt, that man will reply: "You ask absurdities! It is irrational to expect such activities from a piece of wood or stone even under human manipulation."

It is surely so! Yet is it not supremely ludicrous for men and women to expect the ouija-board at human touch to take on life, not only sensitive but also intellectual, and exhibit mental activities which not even highly-educated men can do by their own natural powers? How, then, explain the strange anomaly that matter, contrary to all laws of nature, can think; that a stolid, inert, material substance can acquire under man's hand the essential and contradictory properties of a purely immaterial or spiritual being? If the ouija-board and planchette exhibit sense and mental perceptions, they cannot possibly be their own. If they manifest intelligence, it must necessarily be that of some invisible intellectual agent which, animating them for the time, shows forth by its mental powers of activity its real intellectual and spiritual nature.

Who these invisible agents are that masquerade as the souls of the dead is clear to every Christian who knows from Sacred Scripture that the fallen angels, the outcasts of heaven, are always eager, for

their own pernicious purpose, to intermeddle in the affairs of human life. By their fruits you shall know them. The principle that a good angel does not incite to evil, nor a bad angel to good is accepted by every Christian. It is seen exemplified in the following incident related by Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J.[9]

> "Many of my readers will recall that name of a London priest to whose confessional, some few years since, many people repaired because, as they declared, he always knew what they had to say before they said it. I myself have met more than one of his casual penitents who were deeply impressed by his inexplicable knowledge of secrets which they believed to be hidden from all the world. No doubt, this power was considered by many to be evidence of extraordinary holiness."

But others who believe in telepathy would, in all likelihood, see in it the cause of the priest's knowledge. As many saints, however, have possessed the same gift of reading the secrets of consciences, and as the action in the given example was sacramental, and, therefore, surely holy, we may reasonably conclude that the illumination of the confessor was from on high. In this, Christians find no difficulty, for they accept the teaching of Divine Revelation concerning guardian spirits who are the heavenly-appointed intermediaries bearing God's gifts to men. Christians, moreover, believe that these guardian

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[9] *Month*, Feb., 1918.

spirits love their divinely-given charges, encourage them to good, and protect them from harm of soul and body. Many examples of this guardianship are found in Sacred Scripture, in the Lives of the Saints, and in the experience of many pious Christians. Its usual form is by way of mental suggestion. We have known several individuals who were saved from sudden death by a strong mental impulse to action, which came to them like a flash, when actually ignorant of their danger. No one shall ever know in mortal life how many suggestions to good and against evil, he has received from his guardian spirit.

Furthermore, Christians know that mental suggestion is also the method which spirits of evil employ in their temptation of man. When the suggestion is evil or tends to evil, as is often the case in Spiritism, in which invisible spirit agencies inculcate doctrines subversive of Christian faith and morals, such inspiration or impulse cannot possibly be ascribed to good angels.

On this subject St. Ignatius has left us serviceable instructions which, disclosing the wiles of demons in his own regard, also help us to understand their method of tempting men by means of modern Spiritism. Ignatius having turned from the world to the service of the King of Glory, retired to the cavern of Manresa, where in solitude he might by prayer and penance prepare for knighthood in his new sublime cause. But Satan, in a mental keenness superhuman,

perceived Loyola's capacity for good as a valiant captain, and determined to thwart his purpose. He assailed him with extraordinary and vivid temptations, as recorded by the Saint's biographers.[10] Demons can act only indirectly on man's mind by means of his senses and imagination, and, in this action, they follow, of necessity, the psychological laws which govern human thought. If we examine the nature of these temptations and the psychological methods pursued, we shall see that the spirits of Spiritism employ the same wiles with unsuspecting spiritists of our day. The demon could not well pose as a disembodied soul, as he does with spiritists; for Ignatius was by Christian faith beyond such deception. But, impersonating an angel of light, he wilily whispers insinuations of evil: "Ignatius, you have taken the wrong course! Once more at court or in the army, your holy example would reform everyone about you. Heaven certainly called you, not to hide your talents and your virtues in retirement, but to let your light shine before men in the warfare which you, as an illustrious holy knight, are to wage in the world. Would not your virtues shine more sublimely to the greater glory of God if you lived a saint amid chivalric pursuits and the splendor of crowded courts rather than a hidden penitent?"

Though the demon failed to deceive Ignatius, a

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[10] Rose, *Life of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, p. 57, *et seq.*

man of firm faith and humble prayer, he has succeeded too well with others. In the guise of an angel of light, he made frequent revelations to Swedenborg, the forerunner of modern Spiritism, and inspired him to preach a *New Evangel* known as *Spiritual Philosophy*. He impelled divers spiritists, such as Allan Kardec, to abandon Christ, and give to the world by means of automatic writing an exposition of a new Pantheistic Gospel. By the same means he seduced Mr. Stainton Moses, a parson of the Church of England, to become the apostle of "The New Spiritual Teaching"; and, to pass over lesser types, he has in our own day commanded Sir Oliver Lodge, as we read in *Raymond*, to publish broadcast the "New Revelation" made through professional mediums, as the latest and most advanced phase of the Christian Gospel. Sir Oliver was most fittingly chosen; for, as a famous physicist he would lend to the new spiritistic cult what it needed most, a form of science and respectability which would win a multitude of restless minds befogged amid the mists of religious uncertainties.

The prayerful man still unswayed, the persistent spirits, now working by superhuman powers upon Loyola's imagination, suddenly transformed before his wondering eyes that dark and dismal cavern into a beauteous place, which seemed luminous with celestial glory. His senses and imagination enchanted and his heart throbbing with unearthly joy, Ignatius gazed

into heaven in vision open before him. Through its gleaming portals descended radiant angels, who in smiling welcome approached with the victor's crown to bear him away to the blissful home of the saints. Such deceptive visions are ever potent with self-sufficient, proud and presumptuous minds. Notice how all was in accordance with Loyola's view of the Christian's supernatural heaven. Spirits, by common knowledge, always accommodate themselves to the belief of their intended dupes, and hence with spiritists they substitute a natural for a supernatural heaven, and inculcate a minimum need of natural virtues, promising all, that on passing over "to the other side," they will enter into a sort of super-earthly paradise, a "Summerland," where disembodied souls live a happy life differing but little from our present existence. How sad, that spiritists do not see, as does every Christian, the absurdity of such self-destructive doctrine! A disembodied soul being an entity wholly immaterial and living a purely spirit life, cannot possibly dwell in a fool's paradise like that of spiritists, which, as they picture it, is altogether material.

Unsuccessful, the spirits by change of tactics make a final attack upon Ignatius. They perplex and torment him with harrowing thoughts and fears, and, immersing his soul in sadness even to the lowest depths of woe and desolation, incessantly urge him to despair of salvation. When thus he felt himself

engulfed in gloom and misery, he heard the ceaseless whisperings of those spirit voices suggesting death as the sole and easy means of exchanging his intolerable sufferings for bliss "on the other side."

The same snare the spirits employ to-day with spiritists, in a twofold way. To those in great mental or physical suffering, they open wide the portals of the spirit world, that through them they may by a suggested painless death enter into a blissful rest. For other spiritists not thus afflicted, the spirit, impersonating some dear departed friend or relative of the sitter, speaks of his wistful yearning for his friend on earth, and how he eagerly awaits his coming to "Summerland" where, reunited, they will live in a blissful union forever more. Instances have appeared in the public press where husband or wife, as the case may be, or a fond mother yearning to comfort her bereaved child in "the beyond," has obeyed such an implied summons. In fact, we read in *Raymond* of the "spirit control" repeatedly assuring Lady Lodge that her darling son's happiness is incomplete without her, and that he anxiously awaits her coming, when in a blissful reunion in the spirit realm their happiness will be supreme.

The pernicious revelations of the spirits of Spiritism have for their practical results, not an increase of peace and comfort in the hearts of desolate survivors, but a considerable augmentation in the statistics of suicide. The sufferings caused by

bereavement are great, says Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J.,[11] but the sufferings which result from poverty, illness, disappointment, anxiety, old age, and remorse, are even greater, and for persons of average selfishness come much nearer home. Let a man in great affliction be persuaded by the spirits, that by taking an overdose of some not unpleasant poison, he will wake up, restored to youth and vigor, in a world very like our own, but free from all troubles, and he will feel an irresistible temptation to put an end to his present existence.

An apt illustration of such temptation is the sad case of a young society matron who, as reported in the New York dailies, committed suicide under strange circumstances. She had everything to live for: a devoted husband, three charming children, ample means, and social enjoyment as a member of one of New York's oldest families. But, addicted to the study of occultism and to the psychic practises of the ouija-board, she became obsessed with the belief that in mortal life she could do nothing to aid her husband—whom she idolized—in the attainment of his supreme ambition to win fame in the world of art. Thus obsessed, she listened to the whisperings of intriguing spirits, who assured her that, when disembodied, she could return from the higher spirit life in "Summerland," and inspire him with noble

[11] *Studies*, Vol. IX, p. 251.

visions which would enable him to reach the summit of his aspirations. "I am going to God," she told her friends in her dying moments. Such a delusion, based on ignorance or on disregard of the natural and written law of God, could be prompted only by evil-guiding spirits. To go to God, uncalled for, to stand at the bar of Divine Justice, the soul tainted with self-murder—a crime against the inflexible law of the Almighty, is a spectacle so abhorrent to every Christian mind as to suggest the theory of evil-guiding spirits. That unfortunate matron, with mind deluded by the false teachings of the spiritistic cult, could not see the cautionary force of the Christian Hamlet's words when he said:

"The dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of."

Ignatius, in humble prayer, which was answered by God's secret aid all unseen by those tempting spirits, conquered their crafty wiles as every Christian may. From his experiences of their methods he writes: "It is peculiar to an evil spirit to enter a devout soul in the guise of innocence by assuming the form of an angel of light, and then to come out wearing his own colors." That is to say, he will begin by suggesting good thoughts in conformity with the disposition of a just soul, and afterward gradu-

ally instil perverse intentions to gain his own wicked ends. Hence we must watch the course of such thoughts. If their beginning, progress and end are in every respect good and lead only to what is good, we may conclude that they come from the good angel; but, if the thoughts tend to a lesser good, or to evil, or to a bad termination; if they weaken, or disturb, or disquiet the soul, then it is clear that they proceed from an evil spirit. Even when the inspiration is to something good, caution is required; for an evil angel sometimes begins with good thoughts with the purpose of leading us thereby to the less good or to evil. His inspirations, therefore, with their circumstances and consequences, as well as the end to which his teaching tends, must be examined; for those impersonating spirits commonly begin by dissimulating, and by degrees insinuate secretly some perverse end which corrupts all the good at first presented.

The superior mind of these fallen angels enables them to perceive the character of each mortal, his religious beliefs, inclinations, and passions good or bad, and, as a consequence, to accommodate themselves to the particular condition of each intended victim. If he be an irreligious man or slack in morals, and hence in affinity with themselves, they directly inspire him to continue in his ways. If, however, he be a man of a religious mind and of good morals, they begin with an approval of his religion and his virtues, and, having won his confidence,

labor by insinuations, half-truths, and sophistries to win him by degrees to their own evil purposes. Many an example is on record where Christians, from failure to observe these guiding principles, have been seduced from the Faith, as well as from moral rectitude.

That automatic writing in the third stage, as explained above, whether by ouija-board, or planchette, or other instruments, displays characteristics altogether preternatural, is beyond reasonable doubt; for the information conveyed clearly transcends the knowledge of the medium and the sitters, and therefore exhibits the presence and activity of some invisible intellectual agent. These agents, spiritists assume to be disembodied souls, but in support of their assumption, they fail to furnish any substantial and indubitable proof. Against them are all orthodox Christians, who know that such transactions, since inhibited by Divine command, cannot be ascribed to souls departed, who are subject to God's ordinations; nor to good angels, who always act in conformity with the Creator's holy will.

We close the subject with a few quotations from well-known experts whose sane conclusions after long experience, should be beyond suspicion.

In a recent book,[12] Dr. H. Carrington cites for the purpose of comment, the closing words of a lady's

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[12] *Problems of Psychic Research*, p. 334.

letter as follows: "The messages grew to be of such a nature that it seemed some power was trying to destroy my home life, so I stopped experimenting with it." The doctor's commentary[13] follows:

> "In the case before us this tendency is clearly shown, and the odd mixture of lies and of apparently supernormal information which so often occurs, is also well illustrated. It is because of the supernormal knowledge displayed, that many persons are led to believe all that the automatic writing tells them. The evil consequences are well brought out by the remark that the writing seemed to be 'trying to destroy her home life'—I have known many cases of like nature—and it shows us how careful we must be in experimenting in this manner."

That at times a distinctly malignant influence makes itself felt in automatic communications has been often affirmed by Mr. Stainton Moses, Mrs. Travers Smith, and many other spiritistic writers. Concerning this well-attested fact, Dr. H. Carrington[14] argues thus:

> "If the script does no more than reproduce the fabric woven by the subconscious mind of the experimenter, it is not easy to explain why the entity thus cultivated is so frequently evil and malicious, and why in the finest characters, in the purest young girls, it uses the vilest language and counsels the patient's own destruction. Many suicides

[13] Apud *Studies*, Vol. IX, p. 250.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 250.

have resulted in consequence of the instruction given by the planchette. That I know.

Dr. Carrington is evidently puzzled, because, as a Positivist, he is reluctant to confess belief in evil spirits known to Christians as fallen angels. Nevertheless, he admits that, in using the ouija-board with his wife, he had strange experiences, and finds it hard to suggest an explanation. He writes:[15]

> "There is the theory that the board is moved by some influence—a sort of devil-theory in fact. It would hardly be necessary to mention this theory here were it not for the fact that in our records there is so much evidence of evil influences and minds at work that something is certainly suggested. Of course I do not believe . . . . . that an actual devil, with cloven hoofs and a tail is behind the board moving it, but the answers to certain questions certainly suggested that an intelligence was operative—an intelligence of a low, cunning, malicious, lying, and altogether detestable character. . . . . It is quite certain that the intelligence doing the writing was as different as possible from that of any of the circle. . . . . On several occasions it called Mrs. Carrington and others names which they had never even heard of until they saw them spelled out on paper, and are of such a nature that I cannot give them here."

Like Dr. Carrington, Christians do not believe that the devil, who is an immaterial or purely spiritual entity, has actually cloven hoofs and a tail. Satan

[15] *Ibid*, p. 375.

thus symbolized is not indicative of Christian Faith, but rather of contempt for the arch-enemy of man. The caricature originated in the "Ages of Faith" when the Morality and Miracle Plays were in vogue. Then Catholics were wont to personify the devil upon the public stage in a form which, while expressive of their scorn and derision, revealed at the same time his true identity. From a recent publication[16] we learn that the late Alfred Russel Wallace, F.R.S., though an ardent spiritist, "firmly believed in the existence and activity of malignant low grade spirits who seek to gain control over men." An example he cites in the case of a man who, "having practised automatic writing, became absolutely incapable of penning the simplest note without his hand being moved by another but invisible agent."[17]

Of the many examples of the intervention of spirits in automatic writing, we shall quote one of an extraordinary nature, because it seems indubitable, being vouched for as the personal experience of an author who, before his conversion to the Faith, had no little experience with Spiritism. We can give but a brief sketch of the fully-detailed narrative.

Julius, a man of bright intellect, had read much of the phenomena of Spiritism and determined, after a thorough study of the subject, to experiment for himself with the planchette. In course of time he

[16] Stoddard, *The Case against Spiritism*, p. 93.
[17] Apud *Studies*, Vol. IX, p. 257.

noticed a steadily-growing indication of the presence and activity of an independent mind and personality. Soon he perceived that all his thoughts and doings were commented upon by another mind of an entirely different moral standard. In fact, the mysterious planchette disclosed the presence of an independent intelligence, subtle, logical, and transcending his own level of thought and education.

Julius now employed the planchette at all odd times and for all kinds of purposes, even placing paper and pencil at his bedside when retiring to rest; for his tutelary spirit frequently awakened him for the purpose of communications. As time went on, he noticed that "the other one" was not only gaining ascendency and effecting a great transformation in his moral and intellectual nature, but also permeating his entire being, so that he was no longer capable of thinking his own thoughts, and became the slave of the controlling spirit. At this stage the "control" disclosed his true character, and began to fan assiduously into flame the lowest passions of his victim. Though the intellectual life of Julius seemed to remain vigorous, he felt a kind of moral stupor and paralysis creeping over him. Medical treatment had not the slightest effect upon him.

Desirous of liberating Julius, his friend proposed an experiment, in order to discover the real personality of his troublesome visitor. At the experiment Julius threw himself back in the chair and, closing

his eyes, gave a few gasps and twists, and then passed into a quiet trance-like state. The next moment a violent contortion shook his frame, his features undergoing a strange and startling change, and his appearance becoming that of an old man of a most crafty and cunning type, who in rasping voice poured forth a stream of horrible blasphemies.

When his friend persisted in discrediting the presence of a personality other than that of Julius, the latter shook with frenzy and uttered abusive words as follows: 'What fools you are to tamper with things you do not understand; to facilitate the invasion of spirits and then to deny their existence. I challenge you to any kind of experiment to test my utter independence of the person of this idiot, with whom I can do absolutely as I please."

"First of all," replied the friend of Julius, "if you are an independent being, how came you to be associated with Julius in this mysterious manner?" The voice of the "control" now became more calm and told the story of a long and misspent life. He continued: "What fools men are to doubt the great truths of the Christian religion; to forget the awful responsibilities of life and possible misery in the future! Could they but know and see my suffering, and feel that there is no hope—no hope!"

When the possibility of a change consequent upon a reformation of mind and heart on the part of Julius was suggested, a violent contortion was the

reply, the voice screaming out: "There is no hope for me! My destiny is fixed!" Then came a stream of terrible blasphemies, the "control" cursing God for having created him.

But the friend of Julius insisted: "Why trouble and torment this unfortunate man? What harm has he done you?"—"Because," replied the "control," "he is in nature and disposition like myself, and do you not know that like attracts like? I am bound to be with him, to entice him to further evil and to torture him. At first, I could only influence and pollute his mind, but now I can entirely direct and control his body."

Here the "control" gave a description of the life of Julius, which seemed very improbable, and when his friend challenged its verity, he was told to test its truth by "calling the wretched carcass into life"—as he expressed it. Poor Julius, when told the story, covered his face with his hands and exclaimed, "My God, it is all true!"

In spite of the earnest efforts of the friend of Julius, that invisible intelligence was not dislodged. It maintained throughout that it was an evil spirit who had been drawn to his victim because of his evil life, and had gained entire possession in consequence of the habitual passive state of mind which Julius had contracted by spiritistic practises. The "control" affirmed that all the spirits invited by these means are evil spirits, with evil intent in whatever guise they

come, and that men are fools in not discovering the truth. Spirits, it declared, have access to every fragment of a person's past history, to every secret thought and feeling, and can consequently simulate any personality living or dead. "The most striking evidence," continued the "control," "is no proof of identity. Spirits will take any amount of trouble and practise every sort of deception in order to gain control of men's minds."[18]

Any Christian instructed in the elementary principles of his Faith, will readily understand the meaning of so many expert witnesses when they testify that contact with spirit influence in automatic writing exposes the rash experimenter to the danger of being dominated by unknown, invisible powers which seek to monopolize his thoughts and energies unto his own mental and physical undoing. An exposition of the identity of these spirits and their real nature will be given in another chapter.

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[18] Raupert, *Dangers of Spiritualism*, p. 77.

CHAPTER VIII

SPURIOUS PHENOMENA

SCIENTIFIC investigators of diverse schools of thought, after subjecting noted mediums to the strictest scrutiny, with the sole view of attaining the truth or falsity of their operations, have concluded that fraud plays an important part even among the most famous mediums, and that dishonesty was so common as to justify much scepticism. Dr. H. Carrington, a member of the S. P. R., affirms that the society was unable to find any professional medium who could under test conditions produce satisfactory phenomena, and that it declined to undertake further investigations in regard to such mediums. There can be no doubt, he continues, that the history of Spiritism is saturated with fraud, and that the vast majority of the phenomena obtained through mediums are fraudulent in character.[1]

In the first place, the conditions of the séance are highly favorable to fraudulent practises. The darkness insisted upon, not only prevents, to a large extent, the detection of trickery, but also facilitates the introduction of mechanical apparatus, such as spirit lights, luminous bodies, showers of perfume and the

[1] *Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, p. 9.

like. This is emphasized in the use of the cabinet and curtains behind which the medium operates without much risk of detection. The cabinet always remains a source of suspicion. The best phenomena of Eusapia Palladino originated in the cabinet, and the closer she sat to it, the better grew her performances. Never would she allow an observer to enter within it, nor to intervene between it and herself. The curtains also played a conspicuous part, swelling out till they touched or enveloped her, or at least her hands and arms, as a preliminary to other phenomena.

The conditions, moreover, enforced upon the sitters, such as the holding of hands, remaining in a fixed position, thinking of a certain thing, or gazing at a given point, etc., are calculated to act as an effective check upon investigation. The playing of musical instruments and singing during the séance—a practise always encouraged by mediums—serve to drown the noise of hidden manipulations, as well as to lessen the attention of the sitters, and this is further dulled by the mysterious atmosphere created by the expectation of the marvels that the medium announces as about to happen.

A good illustration is a materialization which occurred at the home of the late Mr. W. T. Stead, and of which Dr. Schofield, an eye-witness, has left us a description.[2] Two well-known American mediums, a

[2] *Modern Spiritism*, p. 165.

man and wife, were giving séances in London. To prevent fraud the two were stripped of their clothing and vested with other special garments. Hands were held and hymns were sung for nearly two hours. Finally it was suggested that while waiting for the "power" all should pass through the cabinet, holding each other's hands to see that there was no fraud. This, of course, gave an opportunity to a confederate to introduce what he wished into the cabinet. After all had returned to their seats, the room was again darkened, and all sang as before. "All at once," says Dr. Schofield, I saw what looked like a pool of quicksilver on the floor where the curtains met. This slowly climbed up as they parted until at last I realized that what I saw was a silvery foot and leg—evidently luminous paint. Slowly the curtain kept on dividing, and a female form gradually emerged clad in a thin gauze wrap; and eventually the curtains fell behind her, and the supposed materialized spirit stood within six feet of me—a gleaming, shining, white figure. The silence was intense; and then the voice of Mr. Stead was heard declaring, in low quiet tones that he recognized the figure as that of a dear deceased relative. Three times did the figure appear and disappear. Mr. Stead announced that anyone who wished might now go up to the curtains and peep through them. All went one after another, in the dark, and peered in, and believed that they saw the luminous presentment of some loved one who had

"passed over." I sat still, and, after half an hour, the curtains were suddenly burst open, and out rushed in her blouse, skirt, stockings, and shoes, the medium in an apparent trance. I caught her, and said "Bravo!" and she replied—"I did it all right, didn't I?"—Despite this exposure, these mediums continued to give private exhibitions in London.

The illusions arising from the conditions of the séance are further heightened by mediumistic artifices. If of old the occult arts thrived upon man's fondness for the mysterious, Spiritism adds a new element of attraction in the natural love which men have for their dead. To capitalize this love is the prime business of every medium. His display of knowledge concerning the inquirer's family, as evidenced in his giving the names of relatives long dead, describing their person and characteristics, the disease they died of and other family secrets, is sure to astound the unsophisticated sitter, and lead him to believe in its preternatural origin.

But how does a professional medium, a perfect stranger to him and his people, acquire such surprising knowledge? His methods are described and specified in Truesdell's book on Spiritism.[3]

We quote one passage:

> "When entering a new town, the medium begins to canvass it as an agent of some business

[3] *Spiritualism, Bottom Facts,* p. 310.—Also, Carrington, *Physical Phenomena,* p. 312.

firm and, without disclosing his real purpose, mixes with the people, and especially with prominent spiritualists, and learns from them all he can of the living and the dead. At the P. O. and at the principal news-rooms of the town he learns who are the readers of spiritistic papers. He visits friends and relatives of persons who attend meetings. On some plausible pretext, he looks into the family Bible wherein are recorded births, deaths and marriages. The children he finds the best and easiest means of information. He scans obituary notices in files of local newspapers, and the records of deaths and their causes at the coroner's office."

This preliminary work is called "planting the town." It is of less importance to-day when mediums have formed an organized Brotherhood, of which each member binds himself to turn in, for the common benefit whatever information he obtains. In a few years a great mass of facts was accumulated which, safeguarded from the public, were arranged, printed, and circulated among the members. Known as the Blue Book, its size and thoroughness may be judged from the fact that it contained about 7,000 names devoted to Boston alone. Supplementary lists are issued from time to time. As an example, we quote a few entries for Cincinnati:

R. B. BARKER (Rich)

"Spt. Dau. Alice E., age 19, pneumonia 1879, upper front teeth gold filled. Extraordinary long

hair, quite an artist. One of her landscapes hangs in parlor in gilt and plush frame. Spirit-painting of her in sitting room, is kept curtained. She is an artist in spirit-world.

"Spt. Fath. Robert B. died 1869 paralysis. Manufact. of machinery, two fingers off left hand.

"Spt. Moth. Sarah, died when he was a child. Spt. brother, James and Samuel.—Spt. Aunt, Lucy Williams.

"Remarks: a good mark for private séances at his home. Pays well. Dead gone on physical manifestations and materializations. Will get up lots of séances. Agree with everything he says and you are all right."

On arriving at a strange place, says Truesdell, he should at once seek the most prominent mediums. If he discovers the identity of the sitters, the rest is "plain sailing." In fact, the sitter, at introduction to a stranger, usually thinks it harmless to give his full name, and that known, the medium on consulting his Blue Book is able to give a most convincing test-séance. His marvelous success will dumbfound the sitter, who cannot account for his knowledge of family affairs which were known to himself alone.

In America the cult, with its organized brotherhood, has its interests cared for by the National Spiritual Association, with headquarters at Washington, D. C. It keeps professional mediums in touch with one another, supports not a few newspapers, employs popular writers, and sends out able speakers, some of

whom, as is well known, followed in the wake of recently-imported propagandists. Moreover, certain training schools for mediumship are maintained, which at times send out circulars for private use only. From one of these we quote the following:

ALFRED BENZON—MODERN SPIRITUALISTIC PHENOMENA COMPLETE COURSE

Initiation Fee	$1,000
Slate Writing	350
Cabinet Séance	250
Trumpet Séance	150
Spirit Photography	500
Materialization	300
Ballot Tests	200
Vase of Isis	100

A catalogue,[4] copyrighted and entitled *Gambols with the Ghosts,* is in circulation among the Brotherhood. "It is to be kept in the same strict confidence which physicians preserve in regard to their patients.

It is no secret that professional mediums in competition advertise their gifts at moderate charges in

[4] "You are aware," says the catalogue, "that our effects are being used by nearly all prominent mediums." Of the phenomena listed we cite but three:

"105—This is the original slate test that convinced so many of the English nobility of the presence of spirits. . . . . Price including slate, etc., $2.50."

"147—Luminous materialistic ghosts and forms in all kinds and sizes. Full luminous female form and dress (with face most convincing) which can be produced in ordinary room or circle, appears gradually, floats about and disappears. Nothing superior. Price $50.00."

"152—Self-playing guitars. Indispensable for mediums. In dark séances they play without medium's hand touching them. Price $25.00." *Cleveland Press,* May, 1923.

the public press. In the *Washington Daily News*, Imogen Stanley published an account of a visit to a "spirit-medium," who gave at the visitor's choice either one- or two-dollar sittings. Selecting the latter, the sitter was, on the arrival of the spirits, greeted as follows:

> "The spirits are rising around you. The room is full: I have never seen so many kind spirits. The spirit voices tell me there will be a great change for you. Things about you now will become of a more satisfactory nature. (When questioned for explanation the same words were repeated exactly.) There will be a great broadening and the future will become more brighter and more happier. The squares of security are watching over you."[5]

Such a wealth of cheerful news, though something like the jargon of a fortune-teller, any visitor, would no doubt, consider cheap at two dollars, were he ignorant of its empty nonsense.

Others, known as business mediums, find it more lucrative to guide men in trade and investments. Though claiming to have been the means of leading others to wealth, they themselves, strange to say, remain poor, eking out a precarious existence. Other mediums profess by spirit powers to foretell the future, and to preserve their clients from bodily perils and illness. The hollowness of such claims has been exposed in innumerable cases of simple-minded

[5] *America*, Sept. 9, 1922.

people, but most notorious is the well-known example of the late Mr. W. T. Stead, a noted spiritist, who lost his life on the wrecked "Titanic." Contrary to the caution of his friends not to board that ill-fated ship, he embarked with a light heart. "Why should he fear when immune from all perils of the sea? Had he not," as he told Dr. Schofield, "been assured by the spirits that his death would be from a runaway horse in the streets of a large city?" How like Macbeth's experience with evil spirits! Perhaps when immersed in ocean's waters Mr. Stead realized all too late in bewildering despair the true character of those "juggling fiends" that buried him prematurely in a watery grave.

Besides professional, there are also private mediums whose object is not lucre. If, however, they be abnormally sensitive and exhibit more than ordinary mediumship, they receive remuneration by way of bounteous gifts and favors from men of learning and prominence, who become their patrons and limit them to private séances for the purpose of investigating scientifically their supernormal powers. Such private mediums, even the most famous, have been found to resort to trickery whenever opportunity offered. Of a series of séances given by Eusapia, in 1895, before a number of scientific investigators at his home at Cambridge, Mr. Myers reports as follows:

> "I cannot doubt that we observed much conscious and deliberate fraud of a kind which must

have needed long practice to bring it to its present level of skill. Moreover, the fraud occurred both in the medium's waking state and during her real or alleged trance. I do not think there is adequate reason to suppose that any of the phenomena at Cambridge were genuine."[6]

The detection of Eusapia's fraud did not destroy her reputation with spiritists in America. Later when, at the invitation of Dr. H. Carrington, Eusapia gave séances in New York before savants in the home of Professor Lord, of Columbia University, she was again detected in trickery. Concerning her, Sir William Barrett, a member of the Society for Psychical Research, who is devoted to psychic research, and believes in the genuineness of many of the phenomena, writes:

"Although Eusapia appears to have supernormal powers, she is a medium of a low moral type, who has been convicted of imposture both in England and America, and with whom, therefore, I should not care to have any sittings. My reason for referring to her at all is the notoriety she has gained and the instructive psychological and moral consideration her career affords."[7]

Experience is admittedly a very efficient master. No scientific investigator has been so successful as the celebrated Houdini in exposing the impostures of unscrupulous mediums. As a magician of interna-

[6] Journal S. P. R., VII, p. 133.
[7] *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, p. 67.

tional fame, his supremacy in the occult arts makes his deception much more difficult. The most famous mediums were always lesser adepts whose tricks he not only knew, but also surpassed without the aid of preternatural agents. Moreover, his serious study of Spiritism for nearly thirty years has brought him more experience with mediums than any other man, and his opinion is therefore of great weight.

While Sir Conan Doyle was lecturing in New York in support of Spiritism, Houdini, in an interview with Karl K. Kitchen, of the public press, affirmed:

> "There is not anything that any medium or group of mediums have done that I can not do under the same circumstances. I have attended several thousand séances in my life, and have investigated practically every well-known medium in the world, and I do not hesitate to say that they practice frauds, and that only the most child-like can accept their revelations seriously. Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Conan Doyle are sincere, no doubt, but they are mistaken in what they have seen; and, what is worse, in their eagerness to believe, they are imposed upon by unscrupulous tricksters. Mediums are simply inferior magicians who cannot do their tricks in the open. The tragic part of their activities is that they have filled the insane asylums with their dupes."[8]

But more of Houdini later. His judgment is sup-

[8] *Literary Digest*, June 3, 1922.

ported by other famous magicians, like Maskelyne, Kellar, and the latest, Howard Thurston. The judgment of Dr. Frank Crane concerning such men is doubtless in harmony with that of every Christian. These magicians, he says, help along a good deal the sanity of the world by showing the public that most of the hocus-pocus put forward by people who claim to be assisted by the spirits and by magic, are nothing but clever tricks.

A few days after Sir Conan Doyle had lectured in Cleveland, the magician, Howard Thurston, followed in an exhibition of the wonders of white magic. He surprised the many spiritists that attended: they saw their best phenomena outdone without the aid of spirits. Before their eyes he transformed a dummy into a beautiful dancing girl; caused a group of young ladies to dissolve instantly into airy nothingness like ghosts; locked a young man in an empty cask, then presto! in his place is a real lion. In a film scene everything was running along nicely when suddenly out walks the young lady from the film calmly smoking a cigarette which the magician had just lighted in the picture. These and other baffling feats he performed in the open and in the full glare of electric light, while mediums, who, says Houdini, are inferior magicians, must confine their "stunts" to darkness.

To avoid taxing the reader's patience, we pass over the endless variety of fraudulent practises which ex-

pert investigators have exposed through the years, and note briefly only a few of the leading types.[9]

Henry Slade, an American medium, acquired a great reputation for "spirit-written" messages on slates, and in answering written questions. In 1872, Truesdell had in private so clearly detected him in fraud that Slade good-naturedly confessed it. On going to London he was soon in high repute, giving many séances at five dollars a sitting. After a few months, however, he was again detected by Sir E. R. Lankester, who snatched the slate from him before the message was supposed to be written upon it, and found the writing already there. Fearing prosecution in England, he escaped to the Continent.[10]

Eglinton had learned Slade's methods, and the spiritists of London next hailed him as a genuine medium. In absolute confidence they challenged their critics, the savants of the Society for Psychical Research, to duplicate his phenomena by any sleight-of-hand performance. In response, the Society engaged S. J. Davey, a young magician, and he not only matched Eglinton, but even added some new effects of his own. So successful were his performances that the spiritists themselves could not tell which were fraudulent and which were genuine. Notwithstanding the exposé, several noted spiritists persisted in believing that Davey (a professional magician) was

[9] Vid. Carrington, *The Physical Phenomena* of Spiritualism, part I.
[10] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, II. p. 89.

a true medium. For a full exposition of the four fraudulent methods of "spirit-writing" on slates, as now in use, see Dr. Carrington's able work, already cited.[11]

A more effective agent for spiritistic propaganda is psychic photography. Passing over W. H. Mumler, its earliest exponent in America, and the English mediums, Mr. and Mrs. Guppy, who were all exposed in trickery, we dwell for a moment upon Buguet, a Frenchman of superior skill who, in visiting London in 1874, imposed upon the most noted spiritists. He had, since 1873, been one of the most famous mediums in Europe. Of the thousands of people who had sat for him and received imprints of ghosts on their photographs, many hundreds identified them as the spirit-forms of dead relations. Arrested in Paris in 1875 for fraudulent practises, he made in open court a confession of trickery and was sentenced to a year in prison.[12] Though his public exposure forfeited popular favor for spirit-photography in England, the leading spiritists refused to admit Buguet's fraudulency until his confession in public court. The will to believe moves mountains, and so Mr. Stainton Moses, the greatest luminary of the cult in the London of that day, attempted, in spite of Buguet's exposure and confession, to save him and the cause of Spiritism, by maintaining that some of his spirit-

[11] *Loc. cit.*, p. 91.
[12] *Loc. cit.*, p. 120.

photos were genuine, though he took to fraud later. If so great a luminary could be blind to facts so patent, it need surprise no one that Sir Conan Doyle, a far lesser light, should be duped by modern "spook-snappers" who, as will appear, are no more worthy of credence than Buguet.

The fact is of importance, for Sir Conan has, in his propagation of the cult, been coursing through our land, exhibiting to wondering and gaping audiences not a few "spook-photographs" as incontestable proofs of the reality of Spiritism. "There can be no mistake!" The photographer is well-known for uprightness of character. Sir Conan himself was present to guard against all trickery, and he recognized the spirits pictured as those of friends departed. Now his audience, unable under the circumstances, to verify the facts asserted, could only take the word of the positive Sir Conan, as that of some Sir Oracle whose *ipse dixit* was infallible. We, however, can calmly examine the truth or falsity of the facts upon which he builds his new religion, and also weigh the value of his testimony.

Having lost a son in the world-strife, Sir Conan, like many another agnostic, was much perplexed by the question, "If a man die shall he live again?" In his grief he sought the solution from professional mediums, who, of course, could furnish him with messages from his dead son, as well as with his spirit-photograph. These, he accepted with credulity.

They sufficed to make him not only a firm believer in Spiritism, but also a zealous propagandist. His words, however, fell upon the incredulous ears of the erudite, roused the hostility of scientists, and drew the ridicule of magicians. In irritation he challenged all presumptuous critics to prove that spirit-photography was a fraud. The challenge was accepted by Mr. Marriott, an expert of his art, who was ready to produce for Sir Conan "spook-pictures" under the same conditions in which William Hope worked. The latter is Doyle's own favorite, whom he rates as the leading psychic expert in Great Britain.[13]

The test took place in Hope's own studio in presence of Sir Conan and four other observers. All knew well Mr. Marriott's purpose, and in a sceptically hostile spirit scrutinized his apparatus and suspiciously watched his every movement. The test finished, all agreed that no fraudulent methods nor trickery was observed. Nevertheless, when the plates were developed, spirit-pictures appeared, and these, as Mr. Marriott frankly admitted, were produced by trickery, but it was trickery that neither Sir Conan nor Mr. Hope, nor the other observers were able to detect. Herein we see the death-blow to Sir Conan Doyle's dual assurance: the one, that fraud under such test conditions is impossible; and the other, that no photographer could practise trickery before his

[13] *Scientific American*, Oct., 1922.

very eyes without detection. His dual assumption thus reduced to nothingness, proves that Sir Conan is not a competent witness.

The overthrow of his argument for the genuineness of his "spook-photographs" will be complete if we establish the falsity of his other assumption, that William Hope is an honest, honorable gentleman, of upright character. Now, there is a positive proof that he is nothing of the kind. He was detected in fraud by tests made by Mr. Price, a scientific expert of the Society for Psychical Research. To guard against trickery in that test, he had the Imperial Dry Plate Manufacturing Company of London stencil by X-rays a secret design upon a half-dozen plates he was to use.

The séance began as usual with the singing of hymns by all seated round the table. Hope then delivered a long extempore prayer, concluding by invoking the aid of the Almighty to get in touch with the spirits of the departed. There were more hymns and prayers, the service ending with the recitation of the "Lord's Prayer."[14] The tests followed, and in the dark room Mr. Price never lost sight of the plates nor of Mr. Hope's hands. He noticed him take a half turn from the light and quickly put the slide in his breast-pocket and substitute another. In brief, the one plate which on development showed a spirit-picture,

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[14] *Scientific American*, Oct., 1922, p. 224.

had not the stenciled X-ray design, and later was seen, on comparison with the original half dozen, to be of glass different in thickness and color. Thus was Mr. Hope, "the leading psychic photographer of Great Britain" and the trusted favorite of Sir Conan, exposed as a common cheat who obtains money under false pretenses.

Passing over the detection in fraud in the case of Mr. Vearncombe and Mrs. Deane, other approved "spook-photographers" of Sir Conan Doyle, we close with a quotation from the Scientific American:[15]

> "The spirit-photography fake is probably the most despicable of all spiritist phenomena. Those seeking pictures are usually folk who have lost someone near and dear to them. Imagine them sitting with a canting psalm-singing humbug of the type of William Hope, who goes through the mockery of a religious ceremony, invoking the aid of the Almighty to get in touch with spirits, knowing full well the spirit is already made and carefully planted, ready to be foisted upon his dupes when opportunity offers! Hope and other like humbugs belong in the penitentiary."

All professional mediums ambition to reach materialization, but that few attain it is evident from the history of modern Spiritism. The numerous investigations made by members of the Society for Psychical Research, says Dr. H. Carrington, prove

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[15] Oct., 1922, p. 225.

that fraud was practised by all the materializing mediums who came under their observation.[16] The late Mr. W. T. Stead affirmed that, upon communicating in 1892 with well-known spiritists to obtain the address of a trustworthy materializing medium, he found that the spiritistic community in the whole United Kingdom knew only one of repute and of undoubted materializing power. She was Mrs. Mellon. This lady, however, when later detected in trickery, shifted to Australia, where she gave sittings at which spirits materialized and were photographed. Certain sceptics, believing the spirits to be Mrs. Mellon under various disguises, agreed, contrary to the rules of the séance, to seize the ghost at the next sitting.

Accordingly on the 12th of October, 1894, during a sitting at her house at Sydney, Mr. T. S. Henry, who describes the affair,[17] suddenly seized the ghost as it issued from the cabinet, and found that he held the form of Mrs. Mellon, who was masked and had a white material, like muslin, round her head and shoulders. The spiritist present rushed at him to drag him away, but at the cost of his clothes he held on till the lights were turned on and all could see Mrs. Mellon in the condition in which he had caught her. This detection of the lady, described by Mr. Stead, as the sole undoubted materializing medium in the whole United Kingdom, shows that

[16] *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, p. 232.
[17] *A Record of Research and Experiments.*

the history of the phenomenon, as far as professional mediums are concerned, is practically one unbroken line of fraud. No Christian, of course, will deny the possibility of materialization, but in presence of its past history, he will be slow to admit any particular fact as real, until he has sufficient evidence to prove its reality beyond all doubt and cavil.

The methods employed to produce fraudulent materialization need not detain us; the reader may find them in Dr. Carrington's work already quoted,[18] and in a recent publication he may read in chronological order the exposures of innumerable professional mediums since the origin of modern Spiritism.[19]

We give a few in condensed form for illustration. In 1873, the ghost of "Katie King,"[20] once very popular in London, was supposed to have emigrated to America, where she appeared through the mediumship of an illiterate couple named Holmes. One night, a gentleman among the sitters, who noticed that "Katie King" had a singularly foul breath for an immaterial spirit, became a detective. He discovered that before each nightly sitting a pretty young widow named White used to go to the medium's house, disguised as

[18] *Op. cit.*, chap. *XIII, XIV.*
[19] *Spiritualism, a Popular History from 1847.*
[20] This fraudulent "Katie King" is often erroneously identified with the other and famous "Katie King" of London. The latter, it is said, was frequently materialized through the mediumship of Florence Cook in numerous experiments with Sir William Crookes, as will be seen in later pages.

a man, and he also obtained certain letters that had passed between them—with the result that "Katie King" and the young widow were shown to be identical.

In 1878, Archdeacon Colley unmasked the popular medium Eglinton, famous for his slate-writing phenomena, as well as for his materializations. At his sitting appeared "Abdullah," a materialized Arab. His flowing beard and draperies were familiar to London spiritists, who were permitted to clip hair from his beard, and to nip off pieces from his mantle. Suspecting Eglinton, the Archdeacon examined his portmanteau and found therein a false beard and a quantity of muslin to which the pieces cut off perfectly corresponded.

When Eglinton, at the height of his fame, was giving innumerable séances, the priests at Moorfields, London, challenged him to hold a séance at their presbytery, paying him a fee of two guineas. One of the priests was Canon Morris, who still survives, and recounts that Eglinton failed to produce any phenomena whatsoever, not even raps. "I have," says Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J., "contemporary accounts of the sitting, and Canon Morris has given me the documents connected with it."

A very recent exposure of a fraudulent materialization is chronicled by the *Scientific American* of January, 1924. On Friday, November 9, 1923, a public séance was given at the Spiritistic Church,

Brooklyn, New York. The climax came when a young man, with an Irish surname, was in the darkness confronted with a ghost. Upon finding his hands securely held by the spirit, he reached forward and bit the supposed apparition. A commotion ensued, and the meeting at once broke up in a free fight. The medium, Mrs. Tomson, postponed the faint, with which she usually meets rough tactics, until she was safely upstairs. The biter stated that he got a mouthful of cheese-cloth. There is, concludes the *Scientific American*, a delicious humor in the idea of biting a ghost and finding that its precious ectoplasm is merely a mouthful of cheese-cloth.

Another recent imposture was made evident at a séance in which the medium, specializing in summoning spirits of great personages from the other shore, entertained the assembled true believers. Thomas Jefferson played rather badly on the bugle, Mary Queen of Scots rapped on a table, and made a chair waltz on two legs; Mark Antony strummed a guitar, and Sir Isaac Newton addressed the solemn gathering briefly, speaking with a pronouncedly Brooklyn accent.

At this juncture, the medium's husband made a special announcement: "If anyone present wishes to communicate with the spirit of some illustrious person, madame will endeavor to materialize the individual desired." At once, an English woman who was a devoted church-member, spoke up: "I wish,"

she said, "to see and speak with Cardinal Newman, or at least to have a message from him personally delivered."

Madame agreed to try. She went off into a trance, uttering muffled moaning sounds. Presently the black curtains of the cabinet were agitated, and then, in the pale bluish light, which focused upon the cabinet, and left the rest of the room in darkness, appeared a dim human form swathed in white, as is customary with all such spiritistic apparitions.

In the midst of the hushed silence, the supposed materialized form of Cardinal Newman took one step forward, and raising two fingers of the right hand, after the manner of imparting a priestly blessing, uttered in impressively deep tones the word, *Benedictine.* The overawed credulous sitters, in ignorance as crass as that of the medium, did not of course perceive her dual blunder. Even if they did, they would, as is usual with spiritists, excuse her twofold error on the absurd supposition that the Cardinal, though in earthly life a superior Latin scholar, now spoke bad Latin, and used a false liturgic form for priestly blessing, because, on entering into the higher intellectual sphere of the spirit world, he had forgotten all former learning, as well as sacerdotal functions.

The two conditions imposed upon sitters made trickery an easy matter. The first is the inky darkness which mediums maintain is necessary for the ghostly

manifestations; and the second is the convenient fiction that, since the spirit is materialized from matter drawn from the body of the psychic, any touching or grasping of the ghost endangers the life of the entranced medium. Wherever this fiction was ignored, fraud has been uncovered.

This ease of deception is well illustrated in the instance related by the principal Research Officer of the American Society for Psychical Research:

> "A company of fifteen gathered in the séance room of Rev. Dr. Hugh Moore in New York City. The sitters saw thinly-materialized spirits whom they recognized and whose voices they recalled. They accepted the explanation that the spirit, dimly discernible in the semi-darkness, had to remain near the medium because of their ectoplasmic connection. But, besides the credulous and expectant sitters, there were also present two calm and critical observers, who saw no spirits, nor heard spirit-voices. They saw only phosphorescent thin cloth draped over the medium's left arm and fist, which when agitated by the movement of Mr. Moore's body, gave the appearance of floating or hovering in air. When a large luminous bundle of white muslin which in the darkness resembled a child was seen moving about and was heard to say 'Come to heaven, mama,' the deception of the expectant sitters was complete.
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> "But the critical investigators knew that Mr. Moore, while wholly invisible in the darkness in his black attire waved to and fro in his outstretched hand that phosphorescent muslin, and at

the same time in a crude ventriloquism mimicked the voice of a child."[21]

"The neatest ultra-scientific detection of a fraudulent medium in New York City," was reported in all the metropolitan dailies of May 28, 1923. The *Scientific American* had offered a prize of $5,000 to any medium who would produce a genuine materialization before a committee of expert investigators. A famous medium accepted the offer. At the séance he sat in the middle of a circle of chairs occupied by the observers, among whom were Dr. W. F. Prince, Houdini the magician, A. C. Lescarbourn, and J. Malcolm Bird, both editors of the magazine.

"When the lights were turned off, it was so dark that a hand held in front of the eyes brushing the face could not be distinguished. The darkness was absolute and disconcerting. In front of the medium were two metallic horns, one of which with a band of luminous paint was the cause of many optical illusions. The committee of experts had secretly installed divers delicate electrical devices to record infallibly every action of the medium: his sitting in the chair, his leaving it, his movements about the room, his handling of the trumpet, his spirit-voices and touching of the sitters. In the next room sat two stenographers with head-pieces connected with a dictograph in the séance room. One of these made a complete record of the 'spirit-voices,' and the other watched the light and with a stop-watch kept an account

[21] W. F. Prince, in *Scientific American*, July, 1922, p. 6.

of the time when it was out, and of every word and sound which occurred at such times.

"These records showed that the medium had been out of his chair fifteen times. The light went out whenever he touched a sitter either by hand or with the trumpet. The medium, despite the darkness, exhibited a surprising celerity in getting in and out of his chair. His longest absence varied from five to eighteen seconds. The perfect working of the divers electrical devices afforded scientific proofs of all the tricky movements of the medium, with the consequence, that the expert investigators declared him an imposter."[22]

Houdini, who like a bloodhound is ever tracking dishonest mediums, has lately detected their newest device for deception.

"The apparatus [he says], enables ghosts to talk by radio. By it unscrupulous psychics can lead thousands to believe in communication with the dead. It brought national fame to a clever woman in a western city. In the midst of her converse with ghosts, she stopped short, exclaiming, 'I see a man murdered!' Then she described a violent death scene, giving the name of the man and his address in the city where he was murdered. The newspapers confirmed her statements, and later spread her fame throughout the country.

"The secret of her spiritistic powers was simple. A radio antenna in the sole of her shoe received impulses from a transmitting antenna in the rug upon which she stood, and conveyed them to a

[22] *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, May 28, 1923.

sensitive head-phone hidden in a large bouquet of flowers on her bosom. It was not loud enough for her audience to hear, but when she leaned her head toward the flowers, she could hear it distinctly.

"She had placed her reporters at police stations, hospitals, and newspaper offices to await the news of a death by violence, which would receive space in the papers. From that time on people paid ridiculous prices for her services—until she was exposed."[23]

As a last instance of fraud, we mention the very recent detection of the Rev. Mrs. J. K. ——, pastor of the First Independent (Spiritistic) Church in a large western city. She had obtained much notoriety by means of independent "spirit-writing," which she exhibited at sittings in different cities. In the belief of her psychic powers, Sir Conan Doyle recommended her to the *Scientific American,* which had a standing offer of a prize of $2,500 for any medium who would produce before its investigating committee any genuine psychic phenomenon.

Acting on Sir Conan's recommendation, that Journal invited Mrs. —— to come to New York, and to give a number of sittings in its office before its chosen scientific investigators. Three sessions were held of nearly one hour each, but no spirit-writings were produced. Forced to the conclusion that the conditions of a modern editorial office were not conducive

[23] *Literary Digest,* Oct. 21, 1922.

to the success of Spiritism, Mrs. —— suggested that if she could get into the country to commune with nature she might fare better. In compliance with her wish, the committee held its next session at Bayside, in the tranquil flower garden of a house overlooking Long Island Sound.

At the sitting there, a member of the committee presented her with a number of blank white cards. Between these she pressed freshly plucked flowers, and laid her hands on top of the pile, asking all present to pray for her success. After sitting in silence for some moments, the medium in scarcely audible tones called for spirit-writing, and, suddenly relaxing, said:

> "See! do see! There they are now. Look at the cards and see what you can read. The waves passed through and through me. Oh, I do hope I have success at last."

Mr. J. Malcolm Bird, the chairman of the committee, looked through the cards. On the first, amid the stains of crushed flowers, was written:

> "Truth crushed to earth shall rise again."

On the second card was written in heliotrope color:

> "How happy I should have been for such an opportunity as this."—*William James.*

The third "spirit message" inscribed with a pinkish fluid said:

> "May this demonstration be conclusive evidence of the return of spirits to earth."

The medium sunk, apparently exhausted, in her seat, but revived sufficiently to say that she was glad everything was turning out all right. The committee was impressed: they had seen no evidence of fraud. "Would not," asked Mrs. ——, "some of the nice scientific gentlemen present tell her just how she did it?"

That was her last sitting before the committee; for the "scientific gentlemen," having subjected her cards with "spirit-writings" to a strict examination, using both a micrometer and a microscope, discovered that her cards were a fraction longer, and differed slightly in thickness, in texture, and in hue; that they showed under the microscope a streak of creamy blue; and that the writing was done with a common mechanical instrument—all which formed visible and palpable proof that her cards with "spirit-writing" were not those given her by the scientific investigators.

"Every opportunity," says one of the judges, "was given her to substitute cards. Even after we were convinced that she could not make good her claim, we all acted the parts of novices, in order to lead her on." The published verdict of the committee follows:

> "Mrs. ——— undertook to produce, for the *Scientific American* investigating committee, independent spirit-writing upon cards supplied by them. The judges in charge of Mrs. ———'s sittings find that she has failed to do this. She

has produced writings only on cards brought to the sitting by her, and substituted by her for those supplied by the committee. The judges, therefore, rule that Mrs. S. has failed to produce any demonstrably genuine psychic phenomena of the ghostly or supernatural order."[24]

Mrs. ——, on returning home to her First Independent (Spiritistic) Church, was warmly welcomed by her devoted clientele, who, in ignorance of her indubitable exposure as a professional medium, or perhaps in spite of it, offer a sad example of the too common fact that people believe what they wish.

Spiritists cannot well complain of the low opinion held by the general public concerning their cult and the nature of its phenomena. Several of their intellectuals have indeed sorely deprecated the prevalence of trickery among the multiplied lucre-loving mediums. But until the leaders of the cult become more honest and religious-minded, and actually winnow the true from the false, the average man will continue to ridicule a cult enclouded with so much deceit. This is as true to-day as when at its flood-tide the poet Saxe wrote of Spiritism:

"If in your new estate you cannot rest,
But must return, oh, grant us this request:
Come with a noble and celestial air,
And prove your titles to the names you bear;

[24] *Cleveland Times*, Oct. 20, 1923. For a full description of the medium's fraud, see the *Scientific American*, Dec., 1923.

Give some clear token of your heavenly birth
Write as good English as you wrote on earth;
And what were once superfluous to advise,
Don't tell, I beg you, such egregious lies."

We close with a quotation from Sir William Barrett's paper to the Society for Psychical Research in 1886:

> "Reviewing the numerous séances I have attended with different private and professional mediums during the last fifteen years, I find that by far the larger part of the results obtained had absolutely no evidential value in favor of Spiritualism; either the condition of total darkness forbade any trustworthy conclusions, or the results were nothing more than could be explained by a low order of juggling. *A few cases, however, stand out as exceptions.*"[25]

These exceptions now deserve our serious attention. It is impossible not to be impressed by the scientific standing and the obvious sincerity of many savants who after discovering many frauds, yet have no manner of doubt that they have witnessed some phenomena beyond explanation by any known force.

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[25] *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, p. 36.

CHAPTER IX

ALLEGED GENUINE PHENOMENA

THE widespread impostures common to the accredited agents of Spiritism have naturally led unthinking multitudes to pronounce, in disregard of any evidence, an *a priori* judgment, that the cult, with its works and pomps, is a sham and all its phenomena only well-manipulated frauds. With the judicious man the effect is different. While neither despising nor sweeping away any evidence offered, he will feel a rational suspicion that justifies him in declining to accept any phenomenon as genuine without direct and positive proof. If from the crude mass of alleged facts, we strike out the great portion due to "the rascality which the system attracts to itself"; if we reject others which may be ascribed to honest exaggeration or credulity; and if we exclude all physical effects which may in some manner be explained without invoking the preternatural, we shall find a residuum, however small, which can be accounted for only by the presence and activity of other than human intelligences. Such is the judgment of scientists and theologians, as well as of the Second National or Plenary Council of Baltimore.

At the very outset, we must avoid an error which, while common to spiritists, also affects the minds of

many timid Christians. The verification of any number of phenomena is not one and the same as the verification of the reality of Spiritism. The two are far apart, and form two actually distinct questions. The phenomena once verified, there arises another question regarding their causes; and granting these to be invisible intellectual agents, we face the further question whether these are the souls of the dead or fallen angels. In assuming the former, spiritists also assume the burden of proof, and for this proof Christians have thus far been vainly waiting.

A Christian knows, on the authority of divine revelation as well as from the nature of certain phenomena, that God, by His extraordinary providence, sometimes allows evil spirits to intervene in human affairs. But he also knows that such intervention is not a regular and fixed institution by which men may communicate with spirits whensoever they will. Philosophically, the notion is contrary to the divine attributes of God, and is disproved by all moralists in their treatise on magic. Moreover, spiritistic séances are always wicked by their very nature, because of the evil intention of communicating with spirits, contrary to the Divine law. Hence, any alleged intervention of spirits must be examined into in every instance or be judged on its own merits according to the evidence, as to its probability or certainty, as the case may be.

That the living have at times received communi-

cations which can be explained only by the presence and activity of some intelligent agent external to our world of sense, is a proposition which no Christian will find difficult of acceptance. It may be said, indeed, to be an essential part of the dogmatic teaching of both Judaism and Christianity. From beginning to end the Bible records many interventions of angelic spirits as the messengers of God to men, and hardly less emphasizes the cunning duplicity of Satan and his satellites in their conspiracy against the welfare of man. In the Witch of Endor's evocation of the prophet Samuel from the dead, we see a close analogy between the woman who had a divining spirit, and the modern medium inspired by a "controlling" spirit. Further, there is another circumstantial resemblance: as a medium becomes clairvoyant only when under the influence of the "control," so the witch did not acquire that same power until Samuel's ghost had actually appeared to her, and only in his presence was she able to pierce the disguise of King Saul.[1]

Sceptics may be dismissed without much ado. They exemplify certain persons who in spite of modern progress in astronomy, still insist that the sun moves round the earth. Sir William Herschel, though not a sceptic, believed for a time that Spiritism was all a quackery. To convince him of his error, a friend

[1] *I Kings*, xxviii.

invited him to a séance which, with the intent of excluding fear of juggling of any kind, was held in clear daylight. As soon as the medium, an ignorant peasant woman, was in the usual trance, the astronomer questioned her regarding a most intricate mathematical problem which after much labor he had lately solved. To his surprise she affirmed that his solution was wrong, and also pointed out the corrections he should make. Herschel, still incredulous, laughed aloud, but at home when reviewing the problem, he found that the ignorant woman was right.[2]

The opinion of every true Christian must differ from that of the sceptic or materialist or agnostic. If he sees mysterious effects that seem to mingle the natural with the preternatural, the material with the spiritual, and the lawful with the unlawful, his faith naturally impels him to hesitate concerning the cause. He is mindful of the elaborate skill of conjurers and their wonderful illusions. He recollects how by her ingenuity and audacity Madame Blavatsky established a reputation for preternatural powers, and, for long, imposed upon the public, and even upon learned men whom she playfully called "Flapdoodles." Such reflections will prompt the Christian to go slowly, and in prudence to look for further and decisive evidence—evidence, which, because of his Christian faith, will in nature and in value differ necessarily

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[2] Lanslots, *Spiritism Unveiled*, p. 56.

from that of the non-Christian. The latter disbelieves in the spirit-world, with its good and bad angels; while the Christian knows that they exist, and have at times manifested themselves to mortals, as is evidenced in Sacred Scripture and the Lives of the Saints. Hence, though predisposed by his faith to accept good evidence in proof of manifestations from the spirit-world, the Christian nevertheless remains perfectly free to reject the reality of such phenomena if, upon examination, he finds the evidence insufficient. He may not, however, deny their possibility. Hence, when confronted with positive evidence that certain subjective or objective phenomena do really occur, and cannot be attributed to human agencies, then only need he search for their hidden and preternatural cause.

The positive evidence demanded, seems to be furnished by many men of great experience and reputation in England, France, Germany, Italy and America. These experts have published the full accounts of their investigations as well as their consequent conclusion, that certain phenomena are of an abnormal character and clearly appear to result from the action of invisible but intelligent spirit-agencies. Of much importance is the verdict of the London Dialectical Association and of the Society for Psychical Research. The latter is an international union of scientists of every creed, whether Christian or agnostic or materialist or sceptic, whose purpose is to make, by

every means known to science, an organized and systematic investigation concerning the reality of a large group of debatable phenomena. After long and careful experiments with the most celebrated mediums, they have reached the conclusion, that while most of the phenomena were fraudulent, some were, beyond doubt, veritable facts. One eminent member has voiced his judgment as follows:

> "Those who deny the reality of these facts, those who treat the whole problem as a joke, regard planchette as a toy and deny the reality of powers and influences which work unseen, should observe the effects of some of the spiritistic manifestations. They would no longer, I imagine, scoff at that investigation and be tempted to call all mediums frauds, but would be inclined to admit that there is a true terror of the dark and that there are "principalities and powers" with which we in our ignorance toy without knowing and realizing the frightful consequences which may result from this tampering with the unseen world."

This verdict of Dr. Carrington, is approved by many scientific observers, such as Sir William Barrett, Sir William Crookes, Professors Porro, Loa, Schiaparelli, Lombroso, Flammarion, Richet, Mosso, Moselli, and a host of others. It is difficult to believe that all were duped by uneducated charlatans who possessed no gift save that of legerdemain. All these scientific men were, moreover, in their search for

truth fully alive to the dangers of fraud and self-deception. Of their common verdict Professor Challis of Cambridge says:

> "The testimony to these extraordinary phenomena has been so abundant and spontaneous that either the facts must be admitted to be such as are reported or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up."[3]

The testimony of these many men of integrity and scientific research, who were eye-witnesses of innumerable experiments with diverse mediums under the severest tests and precautions, has led the Rev. H. Thurston, S.J., an authority on Spiritism, to declare:

> "I believe that in spite of much fraudulent practises there casually occur astounding manifestations which cannot be other than preternatural. It seems to me that no human testimony can establish any historical fact, if we set aside the evidence for these happenings."

There remains, then, after all deductions have been made, a certain number of well-established facts which cannot be disregarded, and whose evidence fits in remarkably well with Christian as opposed to spiritistic teaching. Of well-authenticated mental phenomena, we cite a few from Father Thurston's collection in *Studies*.[4] The first concerns Judge

[3] Apud *Month*, Vol. LXXVI, p. 6.
[4] Vol. 8, p. 389.

Edmonds, who was the leader of spiritists in his day and remains an unquestioned authority. He relates that one day at a séance at which his intimate friend Dr. Dexter was the medium, the latter was suddenly "controlled" or possessed by a spirit which claimed to be that of a criminal whom the Judge had lately condemned to death for a cruel murder. The Doctor, entranced and in violent contortions, wrote sentences of angry abuse, cast papers and books at the Judge's head with great force, threw out his fist at him as if wishing to strike him, his face the while exhibiting intense feelings of hate and defiance.

Similar manifestations of malignity are frequently recorded in the voluminous history of Spiritism. Sir William Barrett, a scientific experimenter for many years writes:

> "Spiritualism reveals the existence of some mysterious power which may be of a more or less malignant character. It is necessary to be on our guard against the invasion of our will by a lower order of intelligence and morality."[5]

Mrs. Travers Smith, the daughter of Professor Dowden, the well-known Shakespearean scholar, has left on record her experience in spirit-writing for nearly seven years. One account is that of the soul of a suicide, whose persistent attempts to communicate had affected her with an intense abnormal de-

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[5] *Threshold of the Unseen*, p. 250.

pression of mind and feelings with the intent, no doubt, of leading her to a like fate.

> "It was [she writes], I presume, a clear case of obsession, first of Mrs. X. and then of me; it seemed quite clear that some external entity of a most dangerous kind was present at these sittings; it illustrates one of the greatest dangers connected with psychic work. The dangers of obsession are hardly realized by those who have not had some experience of them. Never encourage communicators who profess to have led evil and criminal lives. The fact that they will tell you these things, generally means that they will eventually attempt obsession."[6]

Falsehood, Mrs. Travers Smith found to be characteristic of these impersonating spirits. The fact brings no surprise to Christians, who know that the "Light of the World" said of these fallen spirits: "You are of your father, the devil, and the desires of your father you will do."[7] The myrmidons of Satan, who followed him in the first lie, have in penalty been made by Divine ordination subject to him and to his will. This fact spiritists might recognize if they compare the contradictory revelations which these invisible agents make in different parts of the world. Often when detected in falsehood they have brazenly admitted the lie. Of innumerable instances recorded by Mrs. Travers Smith, we recall that of

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[6] *Voices from the Void*, p. 101.
[7] *Matt.* viii, 44.

her familiar "control," who for a time masqueraded under the name of Peter Rooney. She writes:

> "At the second or third sitting of the circle, 'Peter Rooney' made his appearance. He stated that he was an American Irishman; that he had had a most undesirable career, and spent much of his life in gaol; that ten days before he communicated with us he had thrown himself under a tram-car in Boston and had been killed. Sir William Barrett, having made careful inquiries, both from the Governor of the State Prison at Boston, Mass., and from the Chief of Police in that city, found 'Peter Rooney's' tale an entire fabrication. A certain man of that name had fallen from a tram-car in August, 1910, had suffered from a scalp wound, but was alive in 1914, so far as could be ascertained.
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> "On being upbraided by us for assuming a name and identity not his own, 'Peter' admitted that he had no desire that we should know who he was, and that he had adopted that name, as it was as good as any other. In the course of sittings extending over seven years, many influences have spoken through our small circle. Of these some were obviously frauds; and impersonations were frequent."[8]

A remarkable example of psychic phenomena is related by Mr. Chevalier, who, before the committee of the London Dialectical Society, made the following deposition:

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[8] *Voices from the Void*, p. 10-12.

"About that time I lost a child, and heard my wife say she had been in communication with its spirit. I cautioned her, and yet was anxious to communicate also. I placed one finger on the table; it moved, and the name of the child was given. I told a friend of mine what had happened, but was laughed at by him; he however came, sceptic as he was, and placed one hand on the table, asking mental questions which were all answered. He then asked where my child went to school, not knowing himself, and the answer 'Fenton' was given. This also was correct. Frequently after this I obtained manifestations in French and in English, and messages such as a child would send to a parent. At my meals I constantly rested my hand on a small table, and it seemed to share in the conversation. One day the table turned at right angles and went into the corner of the room. I asked, 'Are you my child?' But obtained no answer. I then said, 'Are you from God?' but the table was still silent. I then said. 'In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I command you to answer, are you from God?' One loud rap, a negative, was then given. 'Do you believe,' said I, 'that Christ died to save us from sin?' The answer was 'No'. "[9]

The same witness further testified concerning a séance on another occasion, which was held at the house of a friend:

"Manifestations [he said] were obtained, and as I was known to be hostile, I was entreated not

[9] *Month*, Vol. 76, p. 18.

to interfere. I sat for two hours, a passive spectator. I then asked the name of the spirit, and it gave that of my child. Said I, 'Are you the spirit of my child?' It answered 'No!' And the word 'devil' was spelled out."[10]

A similar incident is narrated in a recent French work entitled *Manifestations Diaboliques Contemporaines,* written by Count de Rougé. It is a real case of Spiritism, the evidence for which seems unimpeachable.

A circle of non-commissioned officers in a certain French garrison were given to spiritistic practises. On one occasion, after a variety of questions had been answered by the spirits, the subject of religion was brought up, and the following queries were proposed by the sitters: "Is the Christian religion good? Answer, *No.* Is it divine? *No.* Which, then, is the true religion? the Spiritistic? *Yes.*"

Present was a young sergeant, a fervent and intelligent Catholic who had previously refused to have anything to do with their sittings. He had, however, been induced to attend the one at which the above answers were given. Disturbed at first, he summoned up courage to question the spirits himself. Permission being given, the following dialogue ensued: "In the name of God I summon you to tell us the truth, Is the Christian religion good? *Yes.* Is Spiritism a false religion? *Yes.* Is Jesus Christ, my Master,

[10] *Ibid.,* p. 19.

God? *Yes.* You have been mocking these young men and are trying to deceive them? *Yes.* You are, therefore, Satan? *Yes.* In the name of God I command you to stop it. And drawing forth a crucifix from his bosom, he placed it on the table, and the latter ceased to emit further rappings."

The outcome of this sitting, writes the Count, at which the identity of the lying spirit was exposed, was the conversion of the young officers to the practise of their faith. In this case the facts are vouched for by reliable witnesses, whose testimony becomes still more weighty from the circumstance that the result was not a mere change of mental attitude, but something more troublesome and evident—the return to the practise of their faith in the reception of the sacraments.[11]

Another psychic phenomenon of undoubted verity concerns a professor of philosophy and the students of his class. The latter made no secret of the matter, and the writer personally interviewed the professor himself in regard to the evidential circumstances in the case. He learned that, some days before the examination in philosophy, a few of the students, who were worried, were very anxious to obtain the questions in advance, and for this purpose resorted to automatic writing at the home of one of the members of the class. Their efforts were successful, for they

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[11] Apud *Eccl. Rev.*, Oct., 1921, p. 442.

obtained very definite information concerning the matter of the examination which the professor had already written out, and safely locked within his desk. The students were very much elated, and after the examination could not keep the secret. At the next ordeal, some months later, when they attempted to obtain the questions in the same manner, they were disappointed; for they were informed that the questions had not yet been written out. This was true; for the professor, having heard of the trick, did not commit the questions to writing till the hour before the examination.

We can select but a few of the many physical phenomena which, to judicious minds, have been verified, as far as any fact can be made credible by human testimony. In the following account, note the medium's condition just before the burst of phenomena in the *Amherst Mystery*.[12]

> "After sitting on the edge of the bed a moment and gazing about the room with a vacant stare, she started to her feet with a wild yell and said that she felt as if she was about to burst to pieces . . . . . while the family stood looking at her, wondering what to do to relieve her, for *her entire body had now swollen and she was screaming* with pain and, grinding her teeth as if in an epileptic fit, a loud report, like a peal of thunder, without that terrible rumbling, was heard in the room. They all started instantly to their feet and stood

[12] Pp. 37-8.

motionless, literally paralyzed with surprise." (Carrington, *Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, p. 364.)

This case evidently presents no reason for supposing that the medium's state was feigned or the result of fraud. The suffering inflicted by her "control" was intense and against her will, with no apparent motive save the manifestation of his evil power. No example more aptly recalls the many cases of demoniacal possession as related in the New Testament.

Since spirit-raps are the common means of communication, it is well to examine briefly a few genuine types. First, there is the distinct peculiarity of the sound heard on the table, or floor, or furniture, or walls, or ceiling, at a distance from the medium, which could not apparently be produced by fraudulent means. They vary in tone and intensity according to the diverse personalities of the "control," ranging from a gentle tap to the startling report of some loud explosion.

A very unusual example is the case of Mr. Jacolliot. At the séance it had been stated that raps would occur in his room at a certain hour, he being alone at the time. As soon as it was dark, he accordingly searched his apartment to make sure that no one was concealed therein. But at the hour stated he heard two blows struck against the wall of his room. Upon walking toward the spot, he was suddenly arrested by a sharp blow which seemed to

come from the glass shade of the hanging lamp.

A second characteristic of genuine spirit-raps is their apparent knowledge and personality. Needless to recall the innumerable examples in which information was given that was not in the conscious mind of any person present, even in the case of private mediums and in the family home circle. Of his own experience Dr. Maxwell writes.[13]

> "The sound of the usual rap on a table reminds you of the tonality of an electric spark. Their rhythm is as varied as their tonality . . . One of the most curious facts revealed is their relation to what I call their personification. In a series of experiments that have now lasted for more than two years, I have had frequent opportunity of studying raps personifying diverse entities. . . . Not only do the raps reveal themselves as the production of intelligent action but also manifest intelligence in response to any particular system or varied code that might be suggested."

Professor Barrett reports a very similar case.[14] "There was always," he says, "a remarkable intelligence displayed and often a jocosity about the sounds, and, when a tune was played on the piano, the raps kept time with it." Like occurrences are frequently described by Sir Oliver Lodge in *Raymond.* But more surprising still, is the evidence that the raps not only exhibit intelligence, but also a distinctly

[13] Maxwell, M. D., *Metaphysical Phenomena,* p. 81.
[14] *Proceedings of the S. P. R.,* Vol. IV., p. 34.

personal character. Each spirit has its own peculiar kind of rap. Thus, Dr. Maxwell states that an individual calling himself "John" always manifests by short, sharp raps, like the noise of the Morse Telegraph. Others, calling themselves "Fairies," disclose their presence by raps of high clear notes. Another entity, personifying a man for whom the Doctor had the deepest affection, reveals his presence by raps of a grave character.[15]

Concerning spirit-raps we may conclude in brief: first, that invisible intelligences, by means of some code agreed upon, convey information unknown to anyone in the circle; secondly, that they apprehend and reply to purely mental questions; thirdly, that they hear and understand the words of the sitters, and reply accordingly; fourthly, that they understand questions stated in any foreign language, and answer in the same; fifthly, that they sometimes tell of distant happenings and persons—all which clearly indicate the presence and activity of an invisible agent whose mental powers are superior to the medium's.

We must not overlook the famous accordion test which Sir William Crookes and others at diverse times had with the medium D. D. Home. Its credibility seems beyond reasonable contradiction. At numerous séances he lifted up the accordion by one end—the farthest from the keys—and, while holding

[15] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 21-82.

it thus suspended, it played of its own accord, opening and closing as if manipulated by some unseen hand.

> "The accordion [says Sir William]was held by Mr. Home in the usual position under the table. He removed his hand altogether from it, and held both hands above the table. It began to play and move without anyone touching it. It dropped on to my foot, then dragged itself away, playing all the time, and went to Mrs. L. It got upon her knees."[16]

Sir William Crookes conducted these tests with extreme care. To exclude all fear of fraud, he devised a wire cage with openings less than one inch apart, and these wires he charged with electricity from a battery in the next room. Thus made impossible of contact from without, the accordion was seen, when placed in the cage, to float about, opening, and closing, and playing tunes of its own accord, "no person touching it and no hand being near."

Certain sceptics have labored under the fallacy that Mr. Home exhibited the phenomenon only at séances with Sir William Crookes; but the fact is, that during a period of twenty years, he gave numerous sittings in England and America, at which the same phenomenon occurred in presence of many men of learning and reputation. We might quote Mr. R. Bell in the *Cornhill Magazine*, August, 1860; Dr.

[16] *Proceedings of the S. P. R.*, Vol. VI, p. 118.

G. S. Thompson in the *Quarterly Review,* October, 1871; Mr. Rufus Elmer in Professor Hare's *Experimental Investigation,* and the Commissioner of the *London Times,* December 26, 1872; but as their testimony is in harmony with that of many eye-witnesses, we shall, for want of space, cite only one representative in the person of Sergeant Cox, a London Barrister, the editor of the *Law-Times,* and Chairman of the Court of Middlesex Session. He was a public character of recognized honor and integrity. He had been entertaining the medium, Mr. Home, at his house during the day, and, on leaving the dining room after supper, witnessed certain phenomena concerning which he testifies as follows:

> "As Mr. Home and myself were entering the drawing-room lighted with gas, a very heavy chair that was standing by the fire, thirteen feet from us, was flung from its place through the whole length of the room, and fell at my feet. No other person was in the room, and we were crossing the threshold of the door. As Mr. Home seated himself at the piano and commenced to play and sing, I took from the box in which it had been sent an accordion I had that day purchased at the Soho Bazaar, and, seating myself, held it up at the end opposite the keys. As Mr. Home continued to play the piano, I felt the accordion lifted up and down and joining, though imperfectly, in the tune he was playing. This was in the light, and therefore I am sure it was not and could not be touched by him, for he was playing

> the piano with both hands. I then requested him to hold the accordion with his left hand (I was sitting at his left) and play an air on the piano with his right hand. He did so and immediately the accordion held by him with the keys under, played beautifully three or four tunes in accompaniment to the piano for at least a quarter of an hour. The accordion was then passed to my hand, and while I held it by the end opposite to the keys, it played a tune perfectly. The force of the upward pressure of the bellows was so great that it required all the strength of my arm to resist it."

Mr. Bell also describes the active presence of this invisible power at a different séance with Mr. Home, in the house of Mr. Milner Gibson, a cabinet minister. While Mr. Bell held up the instrument with one hand in the open room and in full light, it played without any visible agency. The music was wild and full of strange transitions, with a wail of pathetic sweetness running through it. Mr. Bell continues:

> "During the loud and vehement passages, it became so difficult to hold it, in consequence of the extraordinary power with which it was played from below, that I was obliged to grasp the top with both hands. . . . I witnessed the same result on different occasions when the instrument was held by others."

Now, unless we are prepared to assert that Sir William Crookes and many other witnesses all deliberately falsified in the narration of the events that

took place at those séances, what hypothesis are we to adopt to account for such facts as the foregoing? "It is difficult to see," says Dr. H. Carrington, an eminent scientific investigator for many years, "where fraudulent manipulation could be possible in a case like this." In agreement with him are Father Ugarte de Ercilla, S.J., in his recent work *El Espiritismo Moderno,* and Father Herbert Thurston, S.J. The latter affirms: "As to the good faith of the witnesses, it is impossible to suggest any serious doubt." The phenomenon was always produced, not in the usual darkness of the séance, but in a fully illuminated room or in broad daylight, before the watchful eyes of all present. The medium, Mr. Home, as acknowledged even by Mr. Podmore, was never taxed with imposture, and the witnesses, most of whom were men of eminence, some scientific investigators and others of more than ordinary education, were certainly competent to testify to the reality of a fact which often occurred before their very eyes and under their individual touch.

What, then, are the objections of sceptics against those palpable facts? Mr. Podmore, who, in his work, *The Naturalization of the Supernatural,* strives to explain away all things preternatural, does not wish, as a materialist, to admit the facts, and, therefore, while ignoring the strongest evidence, insists on insignificant circumstances or invents fictitious suppositions.

Mr. Podmore's leading error is the supposition that the accordion test occurred solely at séances with Sir William Crookes alone. Such an hypothesis allows him to ascribe the phenomenon more readily to imposture or to hallucination. But to the contrary is the fact, that the eye-witnesses were many, as already seen; their competency to testify, undoubted; and their description of the fact in agreement in all details.

But, again, says Mr. Podmore, in their accounts, there is nothing to suggest that they ascertained the exact source of the music. But that is just what they did; for each witness holding the large accordion suspended from his hand, saw in full light the movement of its keys, felt the pressure of its bellows, and heard its loud tones. Surely, we cannot suppose them all to have lost at once their several senses of hearing, sight and touch. But, continues Mr. Podmore, perhaps Mr. Home had a music box concealed in his pocket or in his clothing. If so, how elephantine that pocket, which could conceal from the observers round about him a music box huge enough to match the loud tones of a large accordion suspended in their midst? Again, the notes of the two instruments are too remarkably distinct to be mistaken one for the other. Mr. Home, moreover, never objected to the examination of his clothing, nor was he ever known to have been guilty of trickery.

But, says another sceptic; the sitters were the vic-

tims of delusion, for their expectant attention was stolidly fixed on the instrument moving up and down by trickery, and they imagined that the music produced by a confederate in the next room came from the accordion. Such delusion is, however, only possible when the observer, seated at a great distance, is unable to rectify the error by the use of his other senses. As well tell a number of persons who surround a player at a piano that the music they hear is not from the instrument before them, but from another in the neighboring room.

These objections are the best that a well-known materialist could invent against facts whose reality has been attested by many competent witnesses. They indeed appear puerile, and the reader will, we think, be rather inclined to accept the unbiased judgment of such critics as Father Ugarte de Ercilla, S.J., Father Herbert Thurston, S.J., and Dr. Hereward Carrington. The latter is second to none in the approval of Mr. Podmore's labors to naturalize the supernatural. Not a spiritist himself, but rather a pronounced sceptic in regard to the reality of spiritistic claims, he has, as a member of the S.P.R., spent many years in experiments, and in his search for truth has written much in the exposure of frauds.

These facts make his testimony concerning the accordion test as strong as any can be. I have, says Dr. Carrington, [17] read the criticism of Mr. Podmore, and

[17] *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, p. 377.

I can only say that it is not convincing to me, in that he dwells too much on the suspicious and insignificant, and omits from consideration much of the strongest evidence offered by numerous competent witnesses, which certainly is not a fair way of treating the testimony of so many men of learning.

We may note that elsewhere, in the same volume[18] Dr. Carrington criticises the method which Mr. Podmore followed in his naturalizing of the supernatural. He was accustomed, he said, to attack the weak evidence of the tests that are more or less easy to explain as conjuring and suggestive trickery, and to point out their defects. But when he came to a phenomenon that could not be explained on his hypothesis, he calmly asserted that it was due to hallucination; in fact, he accepted just as much of Mr. Home's séance as he cared to accept, and then asserted that the rest did not occur at all, which surely is not a logical and scientific method of handling well-attested facts. We have known not a few sceptical Christian writers, who, having accepted Mr. Podmore's conclusions concerning the accordion test, deemed themselves absolved from examining the strong and copious evidence to the contrary.

But, says a certain critic: Kellar, the magician, claimed that he could make twenty accordions play with no one near them. Very true! The magician,

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[18] *Op. cit.*, p. 337.

no doubt, could make good his boast by means of invisible wires or other mechanical appliances before a gaping audience that did not know his secret method. But we must deny the parity between the accordion test in question and the sleight-of-hand performance of a professional juggler. For, in the case of Sir William Crookes and his associate expert experimenters, all mechanical contrivances were, as we have seen, made impossible by extraordinary precautions, such as the wire cage and an electric current. Moreover, there is another proof beyond contradiction in the fact that Sergeant Cox, a London barrister and editor of the *Law-Times*, when on his way to attend Mr. Home's séance, purchased an accordion with which to make a test for himself. He met with Sir William Crookes a number of well-known scientific investigators, members of the Society for Psychical Research, who were there not for entertainment, but seriously in search for truth, bound to unmask fraud if any, and to solve the mystery of that self-playing accordion. The barrister, standing beside Mr. Home, who was playing the piano, unwrapped the accordion he had just purchased, and holding it up in one hand, the keys downward, it began to play, in harmony with the piano.

Moreover, as the witnesses were standing close together in a group, each in turn taking in hand that same accordion as it continued playing, all heard the music and saw before their very eyes the bellows

pressing upward, and the keys below moving without any visible touch. All this was not in darkness, but in a brightly illuminated room, or again in broad daylight in the presence of expert, but sceptical, experimenters, whose principal care was the absolute exclusion of the mechanical contrivances of a magician. Hence the evident disparity between the present test case and the effect produced by some sleight-of-hand performer, who always works under his own conditions and with artificial means of trickery.

Another but rare phenomenon is materialization. It is supposed to be the formation, through mediumistic power, of some ephemeral phantasm which sometimes can be felt, and, under favorable conditions, photographed by a very sensitive camera. It indicates, they say, that the psychical has a tendency to clothe itself in the physical, and that, if the mental impression is strong enough, it can pass over into a material impression. Materialized forms, they say, are fashioned by the spirits from a very peculiar substance known as ectoplasm, which, drawn forth momentarily from the body of the entranced medium, is again reabsorbed. We must again emphasize that here we exclude the many fraudulent materializations common to professional mediums, some of whom we have already exposed, and concentrate our attention only on a few well-attested cases.

Before citing a few examples, we quote the opinion of a Catholic theologian who has made a special study

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of materialization. This is Rev. Philo L. Mills, S.T.D., of Washington, D. C., whose recent work the *Psychology of the Superconscious* has merited letters of commendation from Cardinal Gibbons and Cardinal Mercier.

> "Those who sniffle [says the Doctor] at this astounding claim [materialization] will have to face the fire of the Royal Society and some of the greatest medical lights of France and Germany, not to speak of our own Catholic experts who have gone to considerable trouble and risk in getting first-hand evidence. That most brilliant of modern chemists, Sir William Crookes, President of the Royal Society, speaks with a voice of authority which few can command, when he says:
>
> "I have seen a luminous cloud appear which condensed into the shape of a perfectly-formed hand that presently faded away. Most astounding of all, phantom forms and faces have appeared; and under elaborate test-conditions a material and beautiful female figure several times appeared, clothed in a white robe, so real, that not only was its pulse taken, but it was repeatedly photographed, sometimes with the aid of the electric arc-light, and on one occasion, simultaneously with and beside the entranced medium, who was plainer, darker, and considerably smaller than the preternatural visitor, the latter coming into a previously searched, closed and locked room in my house."[19]

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

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Dr. Mills next quotes Dr. Varley and others who give independent testimony:

> "I held the hand of this strange being [says Dr. Varley] and the half-materialized form of 'Katie' appeared down to the waist, the remainder of the body being missing or invisible."

"Such a tentative projection," says Dr. Mills, "goes to show that the spectre was an ectoplasm, and not a fraudulent impersonation. The affair has been sworn to by Dr. Crookes and his colleagues down to our own day. Sir William Barrett, his intimate friend and collaborator, has witnessed similar things, and regards the phenomena as absolutely inexplicable. Dr. Paul Joire, an eminent pathologist also endorses the Crookes phenomena."

Dr. Mills next quotes Dr. Geley, who speaks similarly and in no ambiguous language. He writes:

> "I have been able to see, to touch and to photograph the materializations of which I am about to write. I have frequently followed the event from its beginning to its end; for it was formed, developed and disappeared under my own eyes. However unexplained, strange and improbable such a manifestation may appear, I have no right to put forward the slightest doubt as to its reality."[20]

Next in citation is Mr. Godfrey Raupert, whom Dr. Mills deems of special weight, because, as an ardent spiritist, he had, before his conversion to the

[20] *From the Unconscious to the Conscious*, p. 53.

Faith, vast personal experience with all the workings of Spiritism, and has since labored zealously to expose its evils and its dangers.

> "By means of this astral matter [ectoplasm] it becomes possible [says Mr. Raupert] for the spirit-agencies to objectivize themselves and to produce most, if not all, of the familiar phenomena. They manipulate it in a variety of ways and for an infinite variety of ends. They use it to produce abnormal lights and sounds; abnormal writings, drawings and paintings; or to fashion human faces or entire bodily forms, often very closely resembling the faces and forms of the dead. The existence of this "astral" force or matter, and its manipulation by the agencies for the purpose indicated, is now admitted by all experts."[21]

From Dr. Mills we pass to Father Herbert Thurston, S.J., an eminent theologian and critical student of Spiritism. He writes:

> "Some alleged effects are of such a nature that they might dispense from all control of the medium's person, once the assembly has been formed with locked doors in a known room. If five living people can be heard, seen and felt in an apartment which, when the doors and windows are made fast, only contained four, we do not need to know whether the medium's hands and feet were securely held at the time of such manifestation.
>
> "Some of the evidence adduced in favor of ma-

[21] *Spiritistic Phenomena. Their Interpretation,* pp. 15-17.

terialization seems to me to be of this nature, and if but one such case be adequately proved, the recurrence of fraudulent manifestations does not affect the problem in the slightest. I must confess that in spite of innumerable cases of palpable trickery, it is hard to deny that genuine manifestations have occurred. To believe that fraudulent sleight-of-hand, mal-observation, or hallucination, can explain away all the recorded experiences of this nature, would in my judgment be subversive of all faith in the miraculous and of all belief in human testimony."

After citing several cases of credible materializations, one in the presence of Dr. Wilkinson and his friend, Father Thurston continues:

"If such a man, looked upon as in the highest degree honorable and conscientious, describes, as he does, a delicately-beautiful hand and part of the forearm which appeared at the opposite end of the table away from Mr. Home, and was clearly seen in the bright moonlight, grasping a handbell on the table, then dropping it on the floor, and finally taking hold of a cambric handkerchief, it is almost as difficult to believe that he could have been mistaken as to believe that he was simply romancing. If such statements were isolated and unconfirmed by other witnesses, we might feel more difficulty in treating them seriously. But the amount of evidence is overwhelming."[22]

In passing to the well-attested materialization of "Katie King," we cannot, at our limitations, enter

[22] *Month*, Oct., 1922.

fully upon the subject. The reader can consult Rev. Herbert Thurston's copious and learned dissertation upon it in the *Month,* March, 1923. We shall note only a few important points. But, first of all, a few words on Sir William Crookes, F.R.S., the chief experimenter.

In regard to the many materializations of "Katie King" through the medium Miss Florence Cook, it is important to remind the reader, of certain points concerning Sir William's character, ability, and trustworthiness. He is widely known in the scientific world as one of the foremost electricians and chemists of modern times. He has enriched science with learned treatises on polarized light, on spectroscopy of the sun and of terrestrial bodies, on the phenomena of polarization and the spectral microscope. He discovered Thallium, the radiant-matter and the tubes that bear his name, which eventually led Roentgen to the discovery of his famous X-rays in 1895. Science is also indebted to Sir William for many researches concerning the photography of the heavenly bodies, especially of the moon, and again in the field of hygiene. All these show that he was by habit a close observer in his scientific labors, a habit which served him well in spiritistic experiments.

Sir William, moreover, was a pronounced opponent of Spiritism, affirming its phenomena to be in contradiction to the laws of nature. But, when later he met with learned men who, as accurate and quali-

fied observers, had with great patience and trouble ascertained the probable reality of some of the phenomena, he was, in sceptical mood, led to begin experiments for himself, for the sole purpose of discovering the truth concerning the facts narrated. For his tests in materialization, he chose, for medium, Miss Florence Cook, and to guard against illusions on his own part, as well as suspicions of fraud on the part of the mediums, he took, at every séance, all the precautions which science could suggest to a man who, like himself, was a conscientious and long-practised scientific observer. His watchfulness and precaution was still more intensified because of his distrust and disbelief in the alleged facts of Spiritism.

His friends and famous scientists present at his numerous experiments, testify that he resorted to every physiological test to ascertain whether or not the materialized spirit were in reality identical with the medium, Miss Cook. The specter did not always appear in human form, but sometimes as a sky-colored nebula, near the medium, from which the materialization slowly developed. From this nebula a human form gradually grew into the visible shape of a beautiful woman who walked about apparently as in real life, and spoke to the assembled guests. Sometimes the figure suddenly disappeared, no one knowing how or whither; sometimes it melted away by degrees, in the same manner it had been formed. The womanly figure was always clothed in a white gar-

ment, wore a turban on her head and was barefooted. She claimed to be "Katie King," the spirit of a deceased Indian maiden.

To make sure that "Katie" was real and distinct from the medium, Sir William often took photographs of her, and, to make it doubly sure, an electrician, Cromwell Varley, used a galvanic battery, by means of which he caused a weak electric current to pass through the body of the medium lying entranced behind the curtains, while "Katie King" stood visible before them. Any movement of the medium to play the part of the materialized form, could not have escaped notice; for she could not leave her place without disconnecting the electric current of the instrument under the watchful care of Mr. Varley. Moreover, for the same reason, as well as for the brief space of time allowed, she could not put on and off her shoes and stockings, the black velvet dress she wore, and robe and disrobe herself in the white garment which "Katie King" always wore. All such actions would at once have been recorded by the electric instrument mentioned.

After this brief sketch of the primal facts in regard to the materialized "Katie King,"[23] we may pass to some particulars.

In 1873-4, at his own house, and again in his laboratory, and at the residence of Mr. J. C. Luxmore,

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[23] Lanslots, *Spiritism Unveiled,* chap. VI.

a magistrate for Devon, Sir William Crookes, F.R.S., conducted an immense number of séances with the medium Miss Florence Cook. On different occasions in his laboratory, under very strong light, he obtained, with five cameras at work simultaneously, more than forty-four negatives of the materialized "Katie King."

Many independent accounts were contributed to the public press by eye-witnesses whose testimony agrees with the statements of Sir William Crookes. Moreover, the facts were such as required no scientific skill to observe; in fact, any child could have observed them. Among the many witnesses were several men of prominence and experience in spiritistic research, such as Mr. J. C. Luxmore, Mr. J. R. Tapp,[24] Mr. H. C. Pennell, Mr. B. Coleman, Dr. George Sexton, Dr. Gully, Mr. C. F. Varley, F.R.S., and Prince Wittgenstein. Moreover, Dr. Charles Richet, the famous professor of physiology in the Faculty of Medicine at Paris, has, despite his pronounced materialism, made it clear in his recently-published work[25] that he regards the experiments of Sir William Crookes as decisive, and that he accepts his statements of the facts without reserve.

Against Sir William and his many witnesses is arraigned the materialistic school under the leader-

[24] Mr. Tapp declared that once when by accident, he clutched "Katie's" arm, "her wrist crumpled in my grasp like a piece of paper, or thin card-board, my fingers meeting through it."

[25] *Traité de Métapsychique* (1922), pp. 630-633.

ship of Mr. Frank Podmore, who according to his principles must deny everything preternatural. But a careful study discloses many broken links in his argumentation.

First, he insinuates that Sir William Crookes and his assistants were not above chance deception—an insinuation quite unwarranted in the case of Sir William. As the most renowned scientist in all England, and the foremost scientific experimenter in spiritistic phenomena, he labored as a pioneer for many years to separate the true from the false. It was only after forty séances with Miss Cook in the materialization of "Katie King," that he felt justified in forming a positive judgment.

Mr. Podmore, furthermore, overlooks many important facts and much evidence that contradict his materialistic stand, and, unfortunately, while placing great stress upon accidental flaws in the main evidence, ignores almost completely the mass of subsidiary testimony which corroborates the facts he disputes. Certain Catholic authors who wish to look upon all phenomena as fraudulent are wont to follow Mr. Podmore, unaware, perhaps, of his materialistic principles or of the weakness of his objections.

As a specimen of Mr. Podmore's reasoning against Sir William Crookes, we subjoin his assumption that "apparently all that Mr. Crookes and his fellow-observers saw besides the figure of 'Katie' was a bundle of clothes on the floor, with a shawl at one

end, a pair of boots at the other, and something like hands attached to it." This insinuation of the presence of a dummy is quite unwarranted; Mr. Crookes and his fellow-scientists were always on the alert against fraud and in the present case especially; for as they knew that the dummy suggestion had already been publicly ventilated, we cannot conceive that Mr. Crookes and his assistants could have neglected to take precautions against so obvious a trick.

Again, another erroneous statement of Mr. Podmore is that Crookes and his associate experimenters made no claim to have *seen* more than the form of the medium. The assertion is in contradiction to facts. Of these some are clearly stated in Sir William's letter to Mr. H. Cholmondely Pennell:

> "At the time of the occurrence I felt the importance too much to neglect any test which I thought would be likely to add to its completeness. As I held one of Miss Cook's hands all the time and knelt by her, held the light close to her face, and *watched* her breathing, I have abundant reason to know that I was not deceived by a lay figure or a bundle of clothes. As regards the identity of 'Katie,' I have the same positive conviction. Height, figure, features, complexion, dress, and pleasant smile of recognition, were all the same as I have seen there dozens of times; and as I have repeatedly stood for many minutes within a few inches of her face, in a good light; Katie's appearance is to me as familiar as is that of Miss Cook herself."

Furthermore, against Mr. Podmore's dummy suggestion are other facts which, attested by many, show that Miss Cook and Katie are two separate individuals as far as their bodies are concerned. Several little marks on Miss Cook's face are absent on Katie's. Miss Cook's hair is so dark a brown as almost to appear black; Katie's is a rich golden auburn. Miss Cook always wears earrings, whilst Katie's ears are unpierced. Miss Cook's complexion is very dark, while Katie's is very fair. The latter's fingers are much longer than Miss Cook's, and her face is also larger. Katie's neck was bare; the skin was perfectly smooth both to touch and sight, while on Miss Cook's neck is a large blister which is distinctly visible and rough to the touch. Katie was altogether a bigger woman than the medium. She was taller, her figure was fuller, her hands and feet were conspicuously larger, and her face was broader. All these attested, striking differences seem sufficient to indicate that Katie and the medium were distinct individuals. These are but a few of the many points in favor of Sir William Crooke's contention.

In his Researches in the *Phenomena of Spiritualism,* Sir William Crookes writes:

> "Raising the lamp, I looked round. I saw 'Katie' [the spirit-form] standing close behind Miss Cook [the medium]. She was robed in flowing white drapery, as we had seen her previously during the séance. Holding one of Miss Cook's

hands in mine and still kneeling, I passed the lamp up and down so as to illumine 'Katie's' whole figure and satisfy myself thoroughly that I was really looking at the veritable 'Katie' whom I had clasped in my arms a few minutes before, and not at the phantasm of a disordered brain. She did not speak, but moved her head and smiled in recognition. *Three separate times did I carefully examine Miss Cook crouching before me, to be sure that the hand I held was that of a living woman, and three separate times did I turn the lamp to 'Katie' and examine her with steadfast scrutiny until I had no doubt whatever of her objective reality.*"

In answer to the question whether he believed the facts to be supernatural or not, he said:

"We are chemists, not physicists, 'tis not our business to believe or disbelieve, but to ascertain whether a given phenomena is imaginary or otherwise; the rest does not concern us. In regard to the reality of the phenomena, we affirm, to the great astonishment of our senses and of our intellect, that the evidence compels us to admit them."[26]

Sir William Crookes never varied in his belief of the reality of the phenomena he and so many others had observed. As late as 1916 he authorized the editor of *Light* to make it known that he "adhered to his published statements and had nothing to retract."

[26] Apud *Spiritism Unveiled*, p. 62.

After a careful study of all available evidence on the one side and the other, two conclusions, says Father Thurston, may be drawn without further discussion:

> "First, that the 'Katie King,' who showed her bare arms and feet, walked about, conversed, sang, was handled, embraced, had her pulse felt, and was successfully photographed on two occasions in 1873, and some half dozen times by Mr. Crookes in 1874, was not a mere subjective hallucination of the mind. She had for the time being a real independent existence. Secondly, she was certainly not an automaton or any sort of lay figure.
>
> "There remain then only four possibilities: First, that 'Katie' was simply the medium herself masquerading; secondly, that she was an accomplice; thirdly, that her part was enacted sometimes by the medium and on other occasions by an accomplice; fourthly, that she was as she purported to be, a materialized spirit-form. I must confess that of these alternatives, it is the *last supposition* which seems to me to be *the least* in conflict with the evidence available."

No authority upon materialization is more eminent than Charles Richet, professor of physiology in the University of Paris. In his recent work now translated into English *Thirty Years of Physical Research*, he gives the results of his long scientific experimentations, and maintains that materializations have been established beyond doubt and that powers

emerge from the human body, and take form and act as if they were material bodies. Of such ectoplasmic apparitions, the professor gives in his book numerous photographic pictures. While rejecting the theory of disembodied souls, he offers no theory of his own in explanation, for he holds that whatever be the invisible and preternatural cause of those phenomena, they lie outside the proper sphere of natural sciences.

An objection which assumes great weight with those who neglect the positive proofs for the materialization of "Katie King," is the fact that after Sir William Crookes had given up his experiments with the medium Miss Cook, she became, a few years later, Mrs. Corner, and began to associate with other mediums of dubious character, with whom she was exposed in fraudulent practise. But, says Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J., in agreement with noted experimenters, this is no conclusive proof that other phenomena under the watchful eye of Sir William Crookes and his fellow-scientists, were not genuine. It is well to recall the circumstance that when at "Katie's" last appearance she bade farewell to Sir William and his associates, it was with the declaration that she would not return again. Hence, when Miss Cook realized, in after time, that she no longer possessed the power of materialization, she resorted to fraudulent practise in the hope of saving her reputation. Such a practise, as we have already seen, has

become common with even the most famous mediums whenever their spirit "control" failed them.

We may here, in passing, incidentally prenote, that the possibility of materialization is in accord with Christian faith, not indeed by souls departed, which, as will appear later, have no longer any natural power over matter, but by other spirits of a superior order and activities. "It is irrational," says Mr. G. K. Chesterton, "to ignore the view which believes that the truth about Spiritism is a more or less *unconscious diabolism.* If it is reasonable to believe in spirits, it cannot be intrinsically unreasonable to believe in evil spirits. To reject the hypothesis that psychic phenomena are mostly due to evil spirits, is to shut our eyes to the one possible explanation of the whole business; *an explanation that really does explain.*"

In regard to the reality of certain spiritistic phenomena, some of which have been adduced in the present chapter, the reader, of course, must decide for himself. There are many men who reject, without serious examination, all alleged preternatural phenomena, whether spiritistic or otherwise; because, as materialists, they deny the existence of spirits and, furthermore, maintain that facts of experience are all to be explained by reference to the activity of laws of physical or material substances. With this latter view, some Christians are perhaps unconsciously imbued, and no evidence will convince them of the

preternatural nature of some of the alleged genuine phenomena.

Allied with materialists are men of sceptical minds, who habitually maintain a hypercritical or incredulous attitude in any inquiry after truth, and who, because of their confirmed mental state of doubt, remain unaffected by any evidence, however strong, in favor of the reality of any phenomena. Distinct from these two classes are others who, from bias of mind, are apt to prejudge, or to form an opinion without any examination of the facts or the reasons that are essential to a just determination. Their fixed opinions concerning spiritistic phenomena are based on common report, or on arguments in harmony with their own view, such as are found in Mr. Podmore's *Naturalization of the Supernatural,* in which he labors, not to examine the genuineness of any phenomena, but by every means to throw doubt upon it, or to explain it by trickery, or to ascribe it to natural causes, as we have shown in the present chapter. Materialists must naturalize all things preternatural. With such biased minds as above mentioned, extrinsic evidence, or authority, is of small avail save when in support of their own sceptical position for it does not force assent as does metaphysical evidence. In the latter the mind sees that a proposition, such as, for example, "A triangle has three sides," is so essentially true, that its contradictory is absolutely impossible. Hence, such men, in presence of extrinsic evidence, which

never compels the assent of the mind when the will is in opposition, are free to suspend judgment, or to turn, by reason of their biased will, to discover arguments to the contrary, while neglecting or distorting the evidence that is presented against their prejudgments. The sceptics, says Mr. MacQueary, in the *Forum*, are quite as prejudiced in their way as the advocates of spirit-communication. If one class of investigators are influenced by their will to believe, the others are blinded by a determination *not* to believe, even though real scientific evidence be adduced.

One may, therefore, meet with men of education who will assure you that all spiritistic phenomena are frauds, because Houdini, the magician, affirms in his recent publication *The Magician among the Spirits*, that he can do by legerdemain anything that mediums do. But these men err in generalizing Houdini's remarks when they should be taken with some modification or limitation. He had met many mediums and attended many sittings, but, as he affirms, they were of the common run of professional or paid mediums, who, according to the knowledge of experts, are nearly all notorious for trickery; and their trickery we readily believe Houdini can outdo with his magical art. With this general class of mediums the Society for Psychical Research has refused to have any further dealings, because of their ill-repute. But Houdini's claim does not include non-professional or strictly private sittings, where real

psychics without hire, give, in all honesty, manifestations to spiritistic friends to the exclusion of the public. In the claim he, moreover, explicitly excludes all scientific laboratory tests with specially-chosen private psychics, which are conducted, not upon conditions laid down by the mediums, but according to scientific methods prescribed by expert experimenters, which positively bar every mechanical contrivance. Such tests when submitted to by over-confident, fraudulent mediums have always led to their discomfiture.

Against biased minds, it is worth while to dwell briefly on the nature and force of extrinsic evidence. Authority brings us into communication with truth by means of the statements of other persons. The truth thus reached is said to be believed, and authority is called an extrinsic motive of certainty. Now, philosophy holds that the testimony of men, under certain proper conditions can give perfect certainty, and these conditions are that the facts testified to, are sufficiently open to, or accessible to, observation; that they are of such great or unusual moment as to challenge attention; that the witnesses are sensible, capable men; that they are undoubtedly sincere, and men of sufficiently different characters, religious beliefs, opinions, parties, and interest as to exclude all reasonable suspicion of collusion or false statements. When all these conditions are found combined in many witnesses, it is commonly held that their testi-

mony affords moral certainty. Among such witnesses in the present case have been found men of all classes of society; men eminent in science, in theology, in philosophy, in statecraft, in literature, law, medicine, and in learning in general. Their combined testimony gives us extrinsic evidence concerning the genuineness, at least, of some phenomena of Spiritism. This evidence is so cumulative and so weighty that Mother Church deemed it sufficient cause to condemn Spiritism, and to prohibit her children from attending séances under any pretext whatsoever. To safeguard the spiritual welfare of her communicants, she would have pursued the same course even if, amid a multitude of fraudulent practises there were found, at least, some phenomena which on evidence appeared to be only *probably* genuine or preternatural. Her position in general and in particular in regard to Spiritism will be exposed in the last chapter.

CHAPTER X

THEORIES OF CAUSATION

RESTING upon the hypothesis that scientific investigators have verified the reality of certain preternatural phenomena both material and mental, our purpose in the present chapter is to examine the various theories offered in explanation of the facts supposedly established. Each theory is, we find, naturally colored by the state of mind of the individual investigator. Many who were non-Christian reached the conclusion that the phenomena were produced by invisible and independent agencies of whose nature they had no knowledge. Sir William Barrett, F.R.S., summarized the result of his prolonged investigation in the following words:

> "What I am prepared to assert from my own experience is that neither hallucination, imposture, mal-observation, nor any other well-recognized cause can account for the phenomena I have witnessed, and that the simplest explanation is the spirit hypothesis."

The following extract embodies the judgment of Sir William Crookes, F.R.S., as published in the *Quarterly Journal of Science* of 1874:

> "I have observed circumstances which seem conclusively to point to the agency of one outside

intelligence not belonging to any being in the room."

The words of Sir William, who stands preeminent among all scientific investigators, acquire special weight when, twenty-four years later, he again affirms in a presidential address before the British Association at Bristol:

> "Nearly twenty years have passed since I published an account of my experiments tending to show that outside our scientific knowledge there exists a force exercised by intelligence *differing from the ordinary intelligence of mortals.* I have nothing to retract—indeed, I might add much thereto."

With Sir William are aligned many other investigators who, while affirming that the invisible intellectual agents are spirits, deemed it beyond their sphere of physical science to invade the realm of the unseen and the unknown, and to declare them to be human souls or evil spirits. How futile, then, in the face of this fact, must be the claim of spiritists who, like Sir Conan Doyle, are wont brazenly to class Sir William and fellow-scientists as advocates of their new cult?

Among other investigators were found a few, chiefly pseudo-scientists who, in ignorance of the existence of other spirits than disembodied souls, declared the phenomena to be produced by the souls of the dead. An example is Dr. Hyslop, professor of

logic and ethics at Columbia University. Leaving his own field of knowledge to wander in another wholly unknown, he seems in his book, *Contact with the Other World*, to have lost all his notions of logic. In proof of his pseudo-science he tells us, when speaking of the discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo, that

> "Their new astronomy gave impetus to the curiosity which led to the theory of Columbus that land should be found on the opposite side of the earth. . . . The discovery of the new world was only another result of the initiative of Copernicus."[1]

What a telltale are his words in presence of the historic fact that Columbus discovered America some seventy years before Galileo was born, and when Copernicus was still a stripling.

Again, other scientific investigators who, as agnostics or materialists, disbelieved in a spirit-world, felt impelled to offer, to the exclusion of all preternatural agencies, diverse natural explanations, such as perisprit, or astral body, or psychic force, or certain unknown forces of nature. Such solutions may appeal to the imagination of the materialist, but to the Christian they seem an attempt to explain facts by the invention of an imaginary something, of which we know absolutely nothing. It is an appeal from effects to fatuitous causes; for, though they cover certain

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 463.

phenomena, they do not touch one that is really preternatural.

In illustration, consider the theory of the astral body as set forth by Dr. Encausse in his *L'Occultisme et le Spiritualisme.* He simply modernizes in scientific language the old occultistic doctrine whose origin dates back to venerable antiquity. He imagines that between the "Ego and the non-Ego," between "the Mind and the Body" there exists one or several intermediate principles. The theory supposes that there is between man's immortal mind and physical body an intermediate agent which has organs and faculties that are absolutely peculiar. This intermediate principle, special to occultists is the astral body twice polarized and connecting the inferior physical with the superior spiritual parts of man. Moreover, this astral body or plastic mediator is luminous when seen apart from material organs; for it may radiate round the body in which it is normally enclosed, and its coming out may be partial or total. From this are derived occult phenomena up to materializations and telepathics. Thus, this astral body may radiate around the individual, constituting a sort of invisible atmosphere termed astral aura, and it may even be absolutely exteriorized."[2]

This astral body is, moreover, as Dr. Encausse maintains, "an organic reality." If so, we say, it

[2] Grasset, M. D., *Marvels beyond Science,* p. 194.

involves a contradiction; for sound philosophy recognizes as non-existent anything and everything that is neither matter nor spirit. In truth, the sole proof for the existence of this astral body are the very facts of the exteriorization of the force for the explanation of which the notion and term are invented. Hence, it is a word merely used to cover a number of facts of whose cause we are wholly ignorant. Against it is the unanimous judgment of the fourth International Congress of Psychology held at Paris in 1900. It declared that "in the whole range of exteriorization nothing had been scientifically verified as yet, outside the facts known already."[3]

The theory of hidden or unknown forces of nature meets with no encouragement when the phenomena are studied in their entireness. Though after many years of scientific research, investigators have been unable to bring to light one iota of proof, nevertheless, the theory, like an *ignis fatuus*, continues to attract the materialist. It is his sole anchor of hope against the admission of the preternatural. We know, indeed, that nature, far from being fully explored, may harbor powers of which we are not now cognizant; but we hold that, though we be ignorant of what such supposedly hidden causes may effect, we may absolutely affirm that they can never perform certain particular acts. For instance, it is beyond

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 232.

all possibility for a stone or a piece of wood to be now or ever capable by its own nature of any intellectual operation.

These theorists, furthermore, must admit the universal principle that an effect cannot transcend its cause. Now, all the known natural forces at work, either on earth or in the heavens, are always found without exception to be blind and necessary agents, as light, heat, sound, and the force of gravity—all predetermined to some particular effect, and so constant and uniform as to be devoid of liberty or choice of action. But all these well-known characteristics are wanting in the causes that with intelligence and free will are said to produce the many diversified spiritistic marvels. These, then, can have no explanation in any physical force analogous in its operation to hitherto known forces of nature. If, for example, the materialization of spirits into lifelike phantoms, with all the properties of human beings, be ascribed to some unknown natural force, then that force must indeed be more surprisingly versatile and mysterious than the phenomenon itself; the more so, since, though it be a physical force always operating necessarily and constantly, it is, nevertheless, supposed to be endowed with contradictory powers, such as free will and super-intelligence, and, moreover, to be capable of giving a medium not only the gift of tongues, but also the power to read the minds of the sitters, to solve complicated mathematical problems, to see in

clairvoyant vision distant occurring events, and to perform other highly intellectual functions. The theory, looking to a futile future for verification, stands as in Scriptural dream, like the statue of Nabuchodonosor, upon feet of clay.

As the theory, however, is often accepted by the unthinking masses, it is well to expose its evident hollowness when measured by philosophic principles. It is certain that all the natural sciences, whether physics, or chemistry, or astronomy, proclaim in unison the fact absolutely established by long observation, that every natural force or agent at work within the limits of our visible universe, exhibits at all times the same fixed and unchangeable characteristics. In the first place, each known force of nature is predetermined to one particular effect—thus mercury, as all other metals, expands with rising and contracts with falling temperature, and water freezes or thaws at a fixed thermometric degree. On the contrary, in spiritistic séances, the effects are not always fixed, nor at the command of the psychic, but multiform in both the material and mental order.

Secondly, every natural force, being governed by fixed and invariable laws, is ever constant and uniform in action—thus, a fiery flame burns of necessity, and gives forth light and heat. But séances have no uniform action, for each without any fixed or unchangeable law follows its own peculiar method of operation, and has also its own variety of effects.

Thirdly, under the same conditions natural forces will invariably produce the same effects—thus, air may be of high or low temperature; if the former, it will absorb more moisture; if the latter, it will deposit dew; material bodies unsupported, will always fall to earth. But such is not the case at séances, where sometimes material objects rise unaided, and for moments remain unsupported in mid-air. Again, there is often an uncertainty of effects; for, when all the conditions usually required for spiritistic manifestations have been met, there follow no results. Frequently the session must be prolonged, and at times adjourned, because of the caprice of the invisible agents, whom the medium cannot always command.

Fourthly, all the forces of nature are devoid of liberty or choice of action. Hence, each and all have a stabilized activity—thus, light and sound must travel at their own differing but invariable speed; the planets must revolve along their fixed and unchanging orbits. But such fixed activities are not characteristic of the invisible agents of Spiritism; for they perform at their own will, or at the solicitation of the medium or the sitters, or at times refuse to act at all. Hence, since these invisible agents possess characteristics essentially different from all the physical forces of nature, and also others of a far superior order, we cannot logically ascribe their free and intellectual activities to material natural forces. Such was also

the judgment of the late Professor James, of Harvard. Though strongly disinclined to extend the territory of the preternatural, he was, nevertheless, very frank in confessing his belief in the reality of occurrences at séances, which were altogether inexplicable by natural causes.

Passing to the spiritistic theory, it may be said to be of all the most simple. It asserts that all phenomena whether material or mental are the work of disembodied human souls. Its sole foundation is the word of communicating spirits who, claiming to be the souls of departed friends, give at times certain signs of identification, which, however, are never absolutely beyond all doubt. The strange and bizarre messages, often incredible to Christians, which they convey concerning life in the spirit-world, cannot, it is clear, be ever verified this side of the grave. The Christian, of course, knows that evil spirits being superior to human souls in knowledge and powers, can simulate them perfectly by borrowing from the subconscious minds of the sitters all that is necessary for identification. But to persons ignorant of the existence of Satan and his fallen cohorts, the spiritistic theory must seem to be the natural and, in fact, the sole solution.

But to spiritists there remains the ever-present, supreme, and insuperable difficulty. If their theory be true, why do not the supposedly disembodied souls supply us with numerous and irrefutable proofs as to

their actual presence and identity? Such proofs are to their highest interests, and they certainly can give them if they can communicate at all. As the theory stands to-day, it must appear most absurd to Christian minds. The beautiful butterfly, after emerging from its chrysalis into a higher, nobler life, never seeks to return to its former lowly state. So a Christian finds it impossible to believe that a human soul, which is of a spiritual nature and existence, akin to the angels, can, when once extricated from its gross and corruptible body, be so stupid as to return and creep into a piece of wood in order to express its presence there by means of the practise of so absurd a manifestation. Such insanity a Christian cannot possibly admit in a spiritual being after it has passed to the superior and nobler life of the spirit-world. He demands ample and indubitable proofs. He knows with Hamlet that those invisible agents may be evil spirits, "for the devil hath power to assume a pleasing shape," and therefore, like that Christian Prince, "he will have grounds more relative" than their word—solid tests, by which he may unmask the hidden personages of those masquerading sprites.

Before proceeding to the identification of those spirits and to proofs that they are not disembodied souls, but fallen angels, who, for their own malign purpose, assume the name and person of departed friends, we must turn to the remaining theories known as the subliminal self and telepathy. These, while

very odious to spiritists, are very acceptable to materialists who by their aid can account for a large number of mental phenomena independently of the preternatural.

According to these theories, a medium can obtain information by thought-transference, either from the minds of persons present, or from others of whom the sitters know nothing. This view, it is held, accords with the recognized facts of hypnosis or trance and with the results of experimental telepathy. But, before considering the reality of telepathy, it is necessary to dwell upon suggestion and the subconscious mind; for these are said to form the basis of the theory.

Suggestion, say Scholastic philosophers,[4] is an excitation which, by directly awakening some image in the imagination, indirectly provokes other associated images to appear, and thus determines the subject to perform the action represented by the first image. Though everybody is amenable to suggestion, some are more so than others. Tell a man he has a fly on his forehead, and he immediately makes a movement to brush it off. A yawning man excites others not preoccupied, to like action. Suggestion, in brief, is the awakening of an image that determines to action.

Its explanation lies in the psychological law that every idea suggested and accepted tends to become

[4] Vid. Mercier, *Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy*, Vol. 1, p. 287.

actual; or, in physiological terms, that every cerebral cell excited by a sensation or idea in turn excites the motor nerve-fibers, and through them the organs of movement which have to come into play to realize the object of the idea. Suggestion has no direct action on the will, but influences it indirectly through the imagination and the sensitive appetite; and this it does by bringing before it an object soliciting it to action. Suggestion need not necessarily come from without; it may be produced consciously or unconsciously by the subject himself, and then, as in mediums, it is known as autosuggestion.

The value of autosuggestion, as a therapeutic, has been long recognized in medical science, and the best physicians commonly apply it in the treatment of diseases either real or imaginary. By its simple but novel application, Emile Coué recently acquired international fame. It is the sole foundation of Christian Science, which has erected upon it a tawdry Eddyism with a heterogeneous mass of nonsensical doctrines.

Mental suggestion is most effective when the subject is of an extremely fine if not abnormal sensibility, and is, therefore, best verified in the neurotic, the hysterical, the hypnotic, and in the entranced medium. All are intensely amenable to suggestion. Hypnosis and the mediumistic trance are artificial states, midway between waking and sleeping; and though their nature remains a mystery, it is well established that both closely resemble sleep, but with

the important difference that they have as their salient characteristic an increased and abnormal suggestibility.

The psychic, when in the trance state, says Dr. Hudson,[5] is governed by the same laws as the hypnotic, and of these laws the most important is that of suggestion. The very entrance of the medium into the trance condition is produced by the autosuggestion embraced in his conviction that he is about to pass under the control of an external force, which he believes to be a disembodied spirit, and in consequence, he is, while entranced, amenable to that same power. In evidence is the well-known fact that any spirit can be then evoked, and one spirit will respond as readily as another; and, furthermore, the soul of a man supposedly dead, but still much alive, will respond with as much alacrity as that of a dead man, but always on the one condition, that the question be so asked as to lead the meidum to believe that the bearer of the name is dead. Stranger still, the spirit of a purely imaginary person is just as responsive to evocation as any other. In proof we have an instance at a séance where an observant spectator asked the entranced medium to call up the spirit of Socrates. The old philosopher responded promptly. His communications were, of course, as became a philosopher, couched in somewhat lofty terms. But the sitters were

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[5] *Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life*, p. 65.

not in the least surprised when the spirit of Socrates persisted in the delusion that in human life he was a Roman citizen. Spiritists are of all peoples the most credulous, and are ever ready with some invention to cover up any puzzling error. "Disembodied spirits," say they, "are so far removed from earthly life as no longer to feel interest in mundane affairs, and many of them have really forgotten their names and nationality." The former assertion is refuted by books on Spiritism which teach that the souls of the dead crowd around the living in a perennial readiness, and even eagerness, to communicate with mortals. The second assertion is refuted by the common teaching of Catholic theology, which, based on divine revelation, maintains that the soul, when freed from its trammels of earth, enters, without loss of former knowledge, into a higher sphere of intelligence, where it enjoys a superior mental activity proper to pure spirits.

A sceptical wag at that same séance asked the medium to summon the spirit of the ancient Greek philosopher, Cantharides. His messages were in the same lofty strain as those of Socrates. Asked for a description of his person, the medium pictured him as an old man with long white hair, a flowing beard, and a "very high forehead." This absurd performance indicates that the medium was dominated by a ridiculously false suggestion, or that evolution in the spirit-world is most surprising; for there a canthar-

ïdes, or Spanish fly, evolved into a Greek philosopher.

These examples do not necessarily prove the medium's insincerity or dishonesty. His entranced condition held his normal or conscious mind in abeyance while it roused his subliminal or subconscious mind into an activity unusual and subject to the law of suggestion. As a spiritist, he firmly believed, not only that he was a chosen instrument or medium whereby disembodied spirits could communicate with the inhabitants of earth, but also that he was, in the trance state, dominated by an extraneous spirit which acted independently of his own conscious volition. His case is not one of dishonesty, but of credulity and self-deception.

The telepathic theory involves the subliminal mind. Man, they say, is endowed with a dual mental organization, the one the objective, or conscious mind, and the other the subjective, or subconscious mind. The former they call supraliminal, and the latter subliminal. This real distinction, they imagine, connotes a dual personality, the one primary and the other a secondary, or submerged, which is called subliminal to designate the subconscious, or hypothetical secondary self that lies below the normal, or wakeful conscious life. The conscious mind necessarily dominates and takes cognizance of outward things through the five physical senses; while the subconscious mind, which is operative through intuition, only dominates and becomes marked when the exter-

nal senses are held in abeyance, as in sleep, or in hypnosis, or in trance. At such times, the subconscious mind accepts without hesitation any suggestion made to it, and, through the principle of association of ideas, adds new features, and clothes them with appropriate surroundings. In the trance state, when the supraliminal self is inactive or quiescent, the subliminal, or hypothetical self, operates below the threshold of consciousness, and manifests its characteristics of a secondary personality, as evidenced in various psychological abnormal conditions in which automatism and secondary personalities appear. In fact, telepathy, say they, is the usual means of communicating between two minds in the subliminal state; and some even affirm that it can operate only between two subconscious minds. Hence the efforts of mediums to put themselves *en rapport* with their subjects.

To guard against certain errors in this theory on the part of non-Catholic psychologists, it is necessary to expose, even though briefly, the true nature of personality. Scholastic philosophers recognize but one mind in man and one indivisible personality. By the mind, or soul, is meant the thinking principle, that by which man feels, knows, wills, and by which his body is animated. In modern philosophy the mind is also called the subject when set in contrast with the external world. Thus the subjective is opposed to the objective mind, as denoting mental in contradis-

tinction to extramental facts. The mind, however, is one, and a real indivisible agent, and, therefore, is more than the series of events known as conscious states.[6]

The doctrine of substantial unity gives us the true notion of human personality inasmuch as it shows that it is not the soul only, nor the body only, but the compound subject of soul and body, which constitutes the human person. By *person* is generally understood a rational individual considered as the subject of certain distinctive and incommunicable attributes. A man's personality is that of which he has cognizance under the concept of self. It is that unity, substantial, permanent, and unitary, which is the subject of all the states and acts that constitute his complete life. An appeal to self-consciousness shows us that there is such a subject of which, thought, will, and feelings are but modifications. Unity of consciousness does not constitute, but manifests unity of being. The physical principle of this permanence and unity of person is the simple spiritual unchanging substance of the rational soul.

Modern empiricists, under the influence of the error of Descartes, confuse personality with self-consciousness and reduce it to a mere coordination of conscious and subconscious states which they assume to be two distinct personalities, when in fact they are but two different phases of the same.

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[6] Maher, S.J., *Psychology.*

If personality were identical with *actual* self-consciousness, we should have to hold that infants are not persons, and also that adults while in sleep cease to be persons. Nor can habitual self-consciousness constitute personality, since the *Ego* or individual substance is something prior to such consciousness which perceives the self as something distinct from its physical state and as preexisting before it.

These observations should be borne in mind when there is question of "variations in personality," as in the hypnotic or the entranced medium. What happens is, not that the first individual subject, or person, in the strict sense varies, or changes, or ceases, or becomes double, but only this, that the forms of activity vary, and, through them, the person comes to know himself. For a person knows himself, not directly, but through his conscious acts. Consequently, as these acts vary, or change, so does the mode under which his personality appears to him, vary or become entirely changed. In brief, our *personality* must not be confounded with the idea which the consciousness of our activity affords us of it. Our conscious states vary with our activity, but these variations do not as a rule make any striking difference in the *habitual idea* of one's self with which everyone is familiar. But in exceptional or abnormal cases they may so upset this habitual idea as to create the illusion that the *Ego* has become someone else, and thus produce a seeming dual personality. Such

delusion is usually common to entranced mediums, even in the absence of an external agent or spirit.[7]

The subconscious mind plays an important part in the explanation of both natural and preternatural phenomena of Spiritism. Consciousness in its widest sense includes all our sensations, thoughts, feelings, volitions; in fact, the sum total of our mental life. It may be best indicated by contrasting it with the unconscious state of swoon or deep dreamless sleep. We are conscious of mental states when we are alive to them or aware of them in any degree. Besides the mental operations which reveal themselves in consciousness, there are vital activities of which we are not at the time aware. When the attention is engrossed by some object of interest, other sensations of considerable intensity may escape unnoticed. We are all conscious at times of trains of thought taking place automatically within us, which seem to possess a certain independence of the main current of our mental life, and are known as "unconscious cerebrations." The sleeper and the man in deep reverie respond to sensorial stimuli by appropriate movements, without having any knowledge of the exciting cause or the resulting movement. It is a fact indisputable, that there enters into the texture of our normal conscious existence a multitude of subconscious or obscure mental processes so dim and

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[7] Vid. Mercier, *Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy*, Vol. 1.

indistinct as to be at best only faintly realized. We do not see any conclusive reason for denying the reality of unconscious activities of the human mind.

Such under-currents lying, as it were, beneath the surface of our mental life are, as already noted, called "subconscious states." For example, while going through some familiar intellectual operation with more or less attention, our mind may at the same time be occupied in working out a second series of thoughts connected and coherent in themselves, yet quite separate from the other process in which our intellect is engaged. In our conscious life there is always a foreground and a background, and subconscious thoughts and sensations are but another name for this background. Certain facts of "immediate memory" can be explained only on the hypothesis of subconscious cognition. Thus, for instance, when walking in the street, you pass a friend without recognizing or even noticing him. Of course, he made an impression on your open eyes, but, absorbed as you were in your own thoughts, you saw him as if you saw him not. When, however, he is a few steps behind you, his features clearly rise in your mind, and you recognize him as your friend, and promptly turn around to greet him. Here your experience becomes conscious only when it is recalled.[8]

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[8] Vid. Gruender, S.J., *Experimental Psychology*, p. 224.

Subconscious cognitions, moreover, guide our outward actions in many occurrences of daily life. Our waking consciousness at any given moment may by careful introspection be found to consist in a heterogeneous mass of impressions of every degree of intensity. Take the case of a man walking about and talking with a friend in some crowded place. His consciousness will include many distinct groups of ideas: he will be thinking primarily of some particular aspect of the subject under discussion, but there will enter, as elements into his consciousness, ideas of its other aspects and of cognate subjects; he will also be conscious of his interlocutor's voice and looks, and more dimly of the nature of his surroundings and of other persons near him; there will be present to him also some twilight knowledge of scraps of conversations overheard, and, lastly, there will be an obscure but adequate conception of his own movements in walking, and speaking, and organic sensations generally—but all these sensations do not come to the foreground of his attention.

It is clear, then, that the subconscious mind is the storehouse of past experiences of which we are not actually aware at the present moment. Some of these lying in the subconscious, we can recall at will, and so become aware of them; others that we cannot recall, nevertheless at times surge up independently of the will. This happens in particular during sleep when dreams, which are the work of a libertine

imagination, run along in a violent outburst of thoughts and images. But even an imagination gone mad, is ruled by physical laws. A dream too is part of ourselves, an upwelling of the subconscious self, redolent of our ambitions, fancies, feelings, and inner thoughts. It is the work of our mind working on our own experience, interwoven with associations, toned with inward, shadowy impulses and feelings, which are awakened by some unknown unconscious force, or mood, or impulse, that dwells deep down on the borderland of our consciousness.

The phenomenon of dreams brings out the broad line of distinction between the subjective and the objective mind. Normally, each manifests itself while the other is quiescent. Hypnosis, or trance, possesses all the salient characteristics of dreams. In both, the first requisite is the total or partial inactivity of the objective senses. In hypnosis, the subject is *en rapport* with the hypnotist, and his dreams are controlled by his suggestions; in natural sleep the subject is *en rapport* with himself, and his dreams are controlled, sometimes by the suggestions conveyed in the current of his waking thoughts, and sometimes by those of peripheral stimuli. In the spiritistic sleep, or trance which the medium induces by autosuggestion, the dreams of his subliminal mind are *en rapport* with the sitters.

The subliminal mind, according to the theory of experimental psychologists, is a mental reservoir

wherein by memory is preserved the complete record of one's whole life. Everything which a man from infancy has perceived through his internal and external senses is treasured up in detail. These innumerable memory images, once recorded, but for the most part long forgotten, lie hidden from the actively conscious mind. In this mental storehouse are, furthermore, registered the mental experiences of man's inner life. There all the secret agitations of his soul lie exposed to the eye that is keen enough to read them. On file are his aspirations and regrets, his hopes and fears, his self-communings and wrestlings, his loves and hates, his successes and his failures, and even many things he would feign forget or hide from himself and the outer world. All these experiences of his inner life no less than those of his outer or sense life are, as it were, historic facts preserved in the secret archives of that mental treasury, forming a true and complete biography of his whole rational existence.

From this subconscious treasury there occurs an "uprush" only in the dream state or in an abnormal condition of the mind, as in hypnosis, or trance, and this uprush is in proportion to the mental passivity that results from the inactivity of the normal or conscious mind. The latter, once at rest, the subconscious acts more freely, and, often at times automatically, without the conscious cooperation of the experimenter.

The treasury of the subconscious mind is, as we have seen, the record of our mental operations; but these operations, says St. Thomas,[9] are of two kinds: some are performed by the soul without a corporeal organ, as exemplified in the intrinsic actions of our understanding and will; others are done by the soul by means of corporeal organs, such as the eye, the ear, and the imagination; hence the powers which are the principles of these sensorial operations, reside, not in man's soul alone, but in his composite nature. Since these two kinds of operations, the one sensorial and the other intellectual, are preserved by memory in the subconscious mind, it is clear that there must be a corresponding twofold memory. Memory may be defined as the mental capacity of retaining unconscious traces of conscious impressions and of recalling these traces to consciousness. This memory is both sensory and intellectual. The former resides in the bodily organism known as the imagination, which treasures up material images, or phantasms; the latter resides in the soul, and treasures up immaterial or spiritual images.

Here it may be asked whether the subconscious mind, so rich in sensory and spiritual images, is as an open book to the keen sight of roving spirits. Can they read therein the story of each man's life, and choose therefrom certain items suitable for

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[9] *Summa Theologica*, I, 77, a. 5.

identification when impersonating some disembodied soul? Our reply must involve certain distinctions and limitations. We do not know how far Divine Providence has restricted the natural powers of these prowling spirits, but we do know that they can act upon material things, and, by their highly superior intellects, can know the workings of the corporeal imagination, and see therein its treasured material images. But this fact does not afford them certain knowledge; for these phantoms are subject to the action of the spiritual intellect, which is under the control of the will. Though from the sight of these material images they may gather some purely conjectural knowledge, they can acquire no certainty; because the actions of the soul, in its spiritual intellect and will in regard to these phantasms, are open to their sight only when manifested by exterior signs.

However great their subtlety of mind, we know it is providentially subjected to certain limitations. For it is of divine faith, as attested by Sacred Scripture, that these spirits cannot naturally know the secrets of hearts. These secrets are commonly understood to be the free operations of man's rational nature which are in no manner manifested by external signs. They comprise not only acts of the will, but also of the intellect and of inferior faculties operating under the free act of the will.

To the question whether angels can know the

secrets of hearts, St. Thomas replies that secret thoughts can be known in two ways: first, thoughts can be known as they are in the mind, and affections as they are in the will: and thus God alone can know the thoughts of hearts and affections of wills; for the rational creature is subject to God only, who alone can work in it as its principal object and last end. Consequently, all that is in the will, and all things that depend only on the will, are known to God alone. Now, it is evident that it depends entirely on the will whether a man actually considers anything, because anyone who has a habit of knowledge, or any intelligible species, or image, uses them at will. Hence the apostle says: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of man that is in him."[10]

In the second way secret thoughts can be known in their effects. In this manner they are open to angels and to men. For, thought is sometimes disclosed, not merely by an outward act, but also by change of countenance, and by modifications of the internal and external senses. If physicians can tell some passions of the soul by the mere pulse, much more can spirits of a superior and more subtle mind and of greater experience, penetrate these occult bodily modifications. Hence St. Augustine says that demons "sometimes with the greatest facility learn

[10] I. Cor. ii, 11.

men's dispositions, not only when expressed by speech, but even when conceived in thought when the soul expresses them by certain signs in the body."

Fallen angels, it is true, know corporeal things and their dispositions, and can thereby know what is passing in the sensitive appetite or in the imaginative apprehension of man, in so far as the sensitive appetite, through following some bodily impression influences his conduct. Yet, they do not necessarily know the emotions of man's sensitive appetite and his imaginative apprehension in so far as these are moved by the will and reason; because even the corporeal nature of man has some share of reason when obeying the dictates of the soul. But it does not follow that if these spirits know what is passing through man's sensitive appetite or imagination, they perceive what is in his thought and will, because these spiritual faculties are not subject to the sensitive appetite or the imagination, but can make various uses of them.[11] Briefly, these fallen spirits can apprehend those free acts of man, which are manifested by divers external signs, and, moreover, can know the acts of the senses and even of the imagination when revealed by some modification of the internal or external senses.[12]

The existence of the mental storehouse in man's memory also explains how the revelations made by

[11] *Summa Theologica*, I, 57, 4.
[12] Baraza, S.J., *De Deo Creante*, p. 259.

the entranced medium need not, in every case, suppose the necessary presence of some external spirit-agency. The entranced medium is absolutely subject to the law of suggestion, and, since by autosuggestion he feels himself in the subconscious state to be the chosen mouthpiece of disembodied souls who wish to communicate with mortals, he speaks and acts in the person of some suggested spirit. In confirmation we have innumerable instances.

M. Flammarion, after having developed automatic writing, produced a series of astronomical essays which were signed by "Galileo." But as the book added nothing new to the science, nothing of which he was not himself well acquainted, he recognized it to be the mere reflections of his own subconscious mind.

A classic example is that of Mlle. Smith, the famous subject of Professor Flournoy. In a trance she perceives a bright star toward which she feels herself floating, and when informed by table raps that she is now on the planet Mars, she gives a description of its life and people—carriages without wheels and horses, houses with water jets playing on their roofs, men and women like ourselves, but dressed in long ornamental blouses. She reveals both vocally and in writing the Martian language, with its complete alphabet, grammar, and vocabulary. In construction and sound it resembles the French, with which its alphabet corresponds exactly. Pro-

fessor Flournoy naturally concluded that the whole affair was a Martian romance, having for its sole source the imagination of Mlle. Smith, who, in her entranced state, elaborated it from her subconscious mind.

Illustrative of the activity of the subconscious mind is the story told by a London publisher, which is a good example of mediumistic writing common in spiritistic literature. A lady offered him a posthumous novel of Charles Dickens. He was, of course, startled and asked how it came into her possession. With much reluctance she informed him that the spirit of Dickens had dictated it to her. The publisher's curiosity aroused, he called for the manuscript, but found it the most absolute trash. When the scribe called again, he gently suggested that the style was scarcely that of Dickens; but the medium drew herself up, and asked: "Was it to be expected that the language of one who wrote from the emancipated spirit-world would not differ very greatly from that which he employed when bound down to a body of flesh?"[13]

Publications which purport to embody communications received from spirits in the other world through automatic writing, planchette, or the ouija-board, have in recent years multiplied enormously, and form a type of literature that is in an extra-

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[13] *Month*, Vol. LXXVI, p. 203.

ordinary degree tedious and futile. Mr. Stainton Moses[14] (Spirit Identity, p. 41), whom Sir Conan Doyle regards as an inspired spiritistic teacher, protested in his day against the prevalence of illiterate Shakespeares and twaddling Swedenborgs. The use of such names, he affirmed, afforded strong presumptive evidence that "the intelligent operator at the other end of the line is not, in all cases, the person he pretends to be."

We subjoin another type of many empty messages which, though the product of the subconscious mind, are supposed to come from the spirit-world. It was given to an inquirer who sought to clear up the forgotten history of the people of Israel in regard to Melchisedech. The famous spirit control known as "Imperator" replied as follows:

> "We must give thee light in brief. There is so much to relate to thee, my friend, that the light would never last long enough for us to give thee a full detailed account of the lives and workings of the mediums of God. Could we have taken up this light in its earliest stages, we could have given thee this information, but it is too far gone for this. So I would ask thee to hasten and get all the information concerning them, viz., the messengers of God. There is not time enough for details in full, so we give thee all we can."

These puzzling words of evasion must have left

[14] Apud *Studies*, March, 1924, p. 15.

the deluded inquirer as wise as before. Of the many impossible descriptions of the spirit-world, we cite one from Judge Edmonds.[15] Mr. Warren was the clairvoyant medium, and he describes the spirit home of a certain lady:

> "It was in extent a suburban villa with the character of a cottage ornée. It was of an Oriental style of architecture, somewhat between Saracenic and florid Gothic. I was shown the interior. . . . The arrangement of the furniture was similar to that of first-class houses here. . . . My sister showed me her dresses. . . . I was then shown her husband's wardrobe. I found that it did not differ in any essential particular from the clothing worn by gentlemen here. I noticed one vest that pleased me. It was of the form now worn here—a double breaster. It was of velvet beautifully figured, black and purple."

Such spirit-writing is a clear example of the workings of a medium's subconscious mind. Mr. Warren, in ignorance of the Christian's spiritual heaven, substitutes one of his own imagination, and, in further ignorance of psychology, imagines a soul departed, which is a purely spiritual, immaterial, and intangible entity, as living amid material things in an immaterial spirit-world, and, without a body, wearing human raiment. More easily could he enwrap a shadow in earthly garments.

[15] *Spiritualism*, Vol. II, p. 541.

Still more absurd were the messages given to Sir Oliver Lodge by his favored medium, Mrs. Osborne Leonard, the "control" being "Feda," the supposed soul of a little Indian maiden. Anxious for information concerning his son's sphere of existence in the spirit-world, Sir Oliver, as we read in his *Raymond,* questions the medium as follows:

> "*Sir Oliver.* Does Raymond want to say anything more about his home, or his clothes, or his body?
>
> "*Medium* (writing). Oh, yes. He is bursting to tell you. He says: My body is similar to the one I had before. I pinch myself sometimes to see if it's real, and it is.
>
> "*Sir Oliver.* Has he got ears and eyes?
>
> "*Medium.* Yes, yes, and eyelashes, too, and eyebrows exactly the same, and a tongue and teeth. He has got a new tooth now in place of another one he had that was not quite right."

Later the medium speaks of the diet in the spirit-world:

> "*Medium.* He (Raymond) says he does not want to eat now. But he sees some who do; they have to be given something which has all the appearance of earth food. People here try to provide everything that is wanted. A chap came over the other day and would have a cigar. There are laboratories over here and they manufacture all sorts of things out of essences, and ethers, and gases. When they first come, they do want things. Some want meat and some, strong drink—they

call for whiskey sodas. Don't think I am stretching it when I tell you that they can manufacture even that. He wants people to realize that it's just as natural as on the earth plane."

At another séance Sir Oliver was told that "Raymond lives in a house built of bricks, that there are trees and flowers, and the ground is solid, and if you kneel down in the mud, apparently you get your clothes soiled." Such news troubled Sir Oliver, and he reverts to the subject:

"*Sir Oliver.* Raymond, you said your house was made of bricks. How can that be? What are the bricks made of?

"*Medium.* That's what he has not found yet. He is told that they are made from some sort of emanations from the earth, like atoms rising and consolidating after they come. We can collect and concentrate them. They appear to be bricks and feel like bricks and I have seen granite, too."

Near the close of the séance the "control" grows somewhat humorous:

"*Medium.* He has brought that doggie again, nice doggie. A doggie that goes like this, and twists about (Medium indicating a wriggle). He has got a nice tail, nice tail with nice hair on it. He sits up sometimes and puts his tongue out. He's got a cat, too, plenty of animals, he says. He hasn't any lions and tigers, but he sees horses, cats, dogs and birds" (*Raymond* by Sir Oliver Lodge, *passim.*)

How absurd to see in these messages anything preternatural! It is only fair to state that Sir Oliver himself considered them non-evidential. Not one of them rises above the natural nor transcends the habitual knowledge of the medium. All are evidently a jumbled mass of phantoms, an uprush from the subconscious mind of the medium, whose imagination, unshackled in the trance state, becomes supremely active and subject to suggestion. How ridiculous the "cigars, whiskey and soda," which appear in "Feda's" account of Raymond's surroundings in the spirit-world? It aptly recalls the Indian's notion of heaven as a place where the good of every tribe will dwell forever with the "Great Spirit" in a happy hunting-ground. Not a whit better was the notion of a modern woman who, in ignorance of the Christian doctrine of a supernatural heaven, issued in the public press her protest against entering "a heaven full of puling infants and old hags." She perhaps was counseled not to worry. Nevertheless, were she a medium, she would surely, like Mrs. Kennedy, construct an imaginary terrestrial heaven in harmony with her own earthly liking.

Nothing better than these diverse extracts exposes the inane and worthless nature of the average spirit-message, wherewith mediums regale anxious but credulous inquirers in regard to the condition of their departed loved ones. To suppose that the devil or his subjects—fallen spirits—had a hand in such pro-

ductions, would be a poor compliment to their intelligence. In every mediumistic message, the contents must be examined in order to see whether the knowledge conveyed be of the subconscious mind of the psychic. Only when it transcends the human, need we attribute it to spirit-agencies.

That under favorable conditions spirit-messages are sometimes given, seems beyond reasonable doubt. When a medium deliberately and voluntarily yields up her normal consciousness, and in trance exposes to the gaze of intellectual but invisible agencies the knowledge which lies hidden in her subconscious mind, we see at once the vast possibilities she places at the command of wandering crafty spirits. If we consider the superior mental powers of these vagrant evil agents and their method of working upon the human mind—a topic for later scrutiny—it will readily appear how their ability to read man's subconscious mind gives them ample opportunities to manipulate the mental images and phantasms in so ingenious a way as to trick and deceive even the most critical observers. Their frauds and hypocrisies have at times been exposed only when subjected to the most critical tests and rigid scrutinies. These exposures are usually possible because of the limitations that evil spirits naturally experience in reading aright and interpreting the images in man's subconscious mind. The late Professor James of Harvard, a psychic researcher, was not slow to discover that

"these strange spirit-beings are under some kind of inhibition and that, though wonderful their powers, they are certainly limited." Such limitation arises from the condition of man's subconscious mind, in which the accumulated mental images and phantasms are not always associated with their circumstances of time, place, and persons; and, in consequence, these masquerading spirits frequently, for want of such particularization, blunder in reading and interpreting the same. Hence we see why, when attempting to identify themselves with some disembodied spirit which they wish to impersonate, they sometimes misapply to a brother instead of to a sister, or to a mother instead of a wife, certain events which they read in man's mental record. In illustration a few examples may suffice. Mr. J. G. Raupert narrates a personal instance in his latest work.[16] After a series of séances in which he had communicated with the supposed disembodied soul of a dear departed friend, he chanced to detect manifest errors in the statements of the invisible agent. Having exposed them in their open falsehood before all the sitters, he suddenly charged the simulating spirit to tell in God's name if he were in truth the soul of his deceased friend. Only after repeated insistence, the spirit answered in the negative. Upon Mr. Raupert's promise not to break up the séance, the demon disclosed

[16] *New Black Magic*, p. 90.

how he had effected so marvelous an imposture. "I obtained," he declared, "all the needed information from your own silly thought-boxes. You sit there like a set of fools in a passive state of mind, by which I am enabled to read your minds, as you read your New Testament."

The late Dr. Funk, of New York, a confirmed spiritist, offers us a personal instance. Though a frequent sitter, he was much disturbed in mind by doubts long entertained concerning the identity of communicating spirits. Hence he rejoiced greatly when, as he told his friends, he had actually established the identity of his lately deceased wife by certain signs agreed upon, as well as by the revelations of most private affairs of her earthly life. But fortunately he was soon undeceived. At a séance where the medium could not possibly know him, his spirit-wife began again to communicate under the usual signs of identification. But several references which she made regarding the manner and circumstance of her death, startled him and roused his suspicions. Proceeding cautiously, he said: "Tell me again, under what circumstances did you leave your body?" She replied: "Why this question? You surely know." She then proceeded to describe what she claimed to be the manner of her death, but what in truth was that of his deceased mother. His wife had died in an entirely different manner and from quite a different disease. Here, too, the masquerading spirit

had manifestly tapped the subconscious mind of Dr. Funk, but had in the choice of phantasms made the most startling mistake.[17]

The subconscious mind is not, however, the only source whence impersonating spirits draw their private and personal information, which often enables them so plausibly to simulate the souls of the dead. Without dilating now upon the superior intellectual powers of angels, whether good or bad, it will for the present suffice to state that within their vision may fall every fact, or incident, or human characteristic, which becomes extant either by way of written or oral expression, or photography, or by any outward manifestation. All these, spirits can employ for the purpose of identifying themselves with some disembodied soul. In this light is readily understood the claim of many leading minds of the Society of Psychical Research, who have confessed that "we have no means of establishing beyond rational doubt the true identity of these communicating spirits."

Our conclusion, then, is twofold: First, that by far the greater number of psychical phenomena may be attributed to the subconscious mind of the medium, without any intervention of an external invisible agent; secondly, that, nevertheless, many phenomena show indubitable signs of the presence and intellectual

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[17] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

activity of some external superior intelligence—each case to be determined on its own intrinsic and extrinsic evidence. This second conclusion is of course strenuously challenged by certain experimenters of materialistic or agnostic minds, who insist that even such supposed spirit action can be explained solely by the theory of telepathy as based upon the subconscious mind. This hypothesis, therefore, calls for an examination in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XI

THEORY OF TELEPATHY

TO EXPLAIN psychic phenomena certain sceptics who deny the existence of spirits, are wont to appeal to the theory of telepathy. The theory, we grant, may account for certain effects which do not seem to pass beyond the natural; but it utterly fails in regard to others, in which an invisible and independent mind and will are manifestly active. Before touching upon the much-disputed theory, it is well to quote a theologian whose writings show him to be an expert critic, and whose opinion may be reasonably taken as indicative of the position of the Church on the subject of telepathy or thought-transference. Says Rev. H. Thurston, S.J.:

> "The Church, so far as I am aware, has never delivered any pronouncement, either directly or indirectly upon the question. Still, just as Catholic psychology, though always with a certain prudent distrust of morbid and abnormal mental conditions, has accepted hypnotism as a phenomenon of psychic experience, which does not necessarily suppose the intervention of any diabolical or evil influence; so it would seem that when adequate proof is forthcoming, she will see no intrinsic impossibility in the alleged discovery that mind can act upon mind independently of

the organs of sense. Fr. Lucien Roure, S.J., in his recent admirable volume *Le Merveilleux Spirite* seems clearly inclined to an acceptance of the reality of certain telepathic phenomena."[1]

Telepathy is defined as the ability of one mind to impress or be impressed by another mind otherwise than through the recognized channels of sense. The term may be extended to all cases of impressions, whether of thoughts, ideas, volitions, or sensations, conveyed from one sentient being to another, without any intermediary known at present to the physical or psychological sciences. Apart from the fact, there is little, says Father Thurston,[2] to urge against the intrinsic possibility of the existence of some rudimentary telepathic faculty, except the fact that it has not hitherto been recognized as one of man's natural endowments. But this lack of recognition for many reasons is explicable, just as the non-recognition, or at least the imperfect recognition, for long ages, of the force of electricity is quite explicable. Radio is a still better illustration.

If telepathy be found in nature, it is in a very low intensity, save in exceptional cases. Dr. Hudson affirms:

> "Examples of telepathy are more frequent than supposed, especially with individuals who, under certain conditions of which we are ignorant, are

[1] *Month*, Vol. CXXXI, p. 154.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

peculiarly sensitive to its influence. It is seldom or ever acquired by persons in a normal state of physical health. When we speak of one possessing telepathic power, we usually mean that he is capable of becoming objectively conscious of messages received by his subconscious mind. In other words, he is capable of elevating the impressions of his subconscious intelligence above the threshold of his normal or objective consciousness. Such a power usually finds its origin in an abnormal, physical condition. A perfectly normal healthy man is seldom able to assimulate the full contents of a telepathic message. If it reach his consciousness at all, it is only in the form of a vague impression, which is soon submerged or thrown off by his superabundant vitality. The work of a trained psychic or medium is to read the mind of his sitters and any telepathic message latent in the mind of his client."[3]

Apart from Dr. Hudson's conclusions, we may ask whether telepathy is, after all, really and scientifically established as a fact. Sir Oliver Lodge's espousal of telepathy has, says Father Thurston, roused the ire of the materialistic "Die-hards of the Haeckelian tradition." Against him, Sir H. B. Donkin writes: "All the evidence produced in support of telepathy is valueless, not only to scientists, but also to men of ordinary common sense." Similarly Sir Ray Lankester describes telepathy as "simply a boldly-invented word for a supposed

[3] *A Scientific Study of the Future Life*, p. 92.

phenomenon which has never been demonstrated," and Mr. Clodd denounces the "invoking of the unknown to explain the non-existent, called telepathy."

The current educated opinion, however, which has in recent years steadily set in favor of telepathy, has, says Father Thurston, infuriated these Haeckelian theorists, because they see in it a shrewd blow to their materialistic concept of the universe. This undeniable movement is voiced by Dr. J. H. Skrine:

> "The present age has brought us a fresh discovery. The intercourse between one human consciousness and another by some means of communication which is not conveyed by any known action of the senses, such as, language or physical signalling, has become an ascertained law of nature. It may be possible to find men of respected judgment who will not yet admit this; for I have myself encountered such denial. But so did eminent intellectuals in the days of Galileo deny that the earth is round."[4]

Probably no authority is of greater weight than that of the late Mr. Frank Podmore, whose researches during many years in Spiritism and telepathy have won the praise of many rationalists. His latest work, *Apparitions and Thought Transference*, ably illustrates his one thesis: "That communication is possible between mind and mind otherwise than through the known channels of the senses." His position is

[4] *Hibbert Journal*, Oct., 1917, p. 133.

enforced by the favorable judgment of many psychologists; such as, the late Professor James of Harvard, the Italians Morselli and Lombroso, Professor Flournoy, Pierre Janet, and Dr. Richet of Paris, as well as many others, all in agreement as to the fact of telepathy, though they differ in their explanations.

Here it is opportune to consider in relation to telepathy the immense mass of cases collected by Mr. Frank Podmore in his *Phantasma of the Living*, wherein we have indubitable records of apparitions occurring, mostly after death, to far-distant friends or acquaintances still living. Many of these had no religious coloring at all, and were made to unbelievers, with no suggestion of a supernatural or preternatural purpose. For several decades scientific researchers have been seeking a solution of the mystery. Whatever its ultimate explanation, it is certain, says Dr. Carrington,[5] that some form of telepathy exists. Though we do not know its mode of causation, it is nevertheless a fact which has been approved by innumerable well-attested examples. It is of great value as an explanatory hypothesis, enabling us to account for many phenomena for which we could otherwise have no rational explanation. During its years of investigation, the Society for Psychical Research has observed that the large majority of these

[5] *Scientific American*, June, 1922.

so-called apparitions coincided with the death of the person represented by the phantasmal figure. Need we suppose that the soul of the dead man was actually present and manifesting itself at such a time? By no means, replies Dr. Carrington. Since these apparitions do not reach the supernatural nor even the preternatural, they must, no matter what their mysterious origin, lie within the range of nature. Now, the modern theory of telepathy, says the Doctor, accounts for such manifestations in a rational manner and in conformity with the traditions of science. For, we need only suppose that a telepathic impulse was conveyed to the recipient's mind from the mind of the dying person, and then externalized in some phantasmal form known as an hallucination. If scientific men for the most part support the theory of telepathy, others maintain an open mind, and others again are sceptical, because we do now know its mode of causation. But a fact is one thing, and its explanation quite another. Nature has many mysteries.[6]

Though to-day telepathy seems verified by many scientific investigators as a fact, it has as yet, says Professor Hyslop, found no place in recognized psychology:

> "We cannot explain telepathy, which, therefore, at the most can be accepted as a term covering certain effects which have been observed

[6] Vid. Podmore, *Apparitions and Thought-Transference.*

and reproduced, and, as a consequence, it does not explain phenomena which it seems to cover."[7]

Still more explicit is the affirmation of Mr. Podmore:

> "Neither the organs by which, nor the medium through which, the communication is made can be indicated, nor can we even with a few trifling exceptions point to the conditions which favor such communication. For forty years the theory has been subjected to scientific study, and during that period has met with much adverse and some instructive criticism. But every explanation yet suggested has not attained even a momentary plausibility."[8]

Some have imagined that telepathy, or thought-transference from brain to brain is by means of ether vibrations; others by the externalization of some psychic force; and others again by some hidden supernormal faculty. The fourth and more common theory is that the "subconscious mind" of the psychic, being abnormally active in the trance state, can gather telepathically the needed information from the minds of others. The great defect of this theory is that its only proof is the very fact itself which it seeks to explain. Telepathy, then, be it noted, is simply a term that denotes nothing more than a recognized fact, for which no explanation has as yet been found.

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[7] *Science of Future Life*, p. 37.
[8] *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

In illustration of telepathic action which appears free from spirit-influence, Dr. Quintard narrates the case of a French boy, five years of age, who in presence of his mother was able to solve in a moment any complicated problem in mathematics. This was true even when the problem was presented to him in languages of which he knew not a word. His strange powers, however, failed him completely in the absence of his mother, or when, if present, she was unable to solve the problem. Here is an evident example of thought-transference between mother and child, which appears natural or free from spirit intervention; for, if the child's abnormal powers were due to spirit agency, these powers would have been equally active in the absence of the mother, or when she was unable to solve the problems.

Another striking example is the revelation of Adèle Maginot. She professed in the trance state to see the figures of deceased friends of persons who came to consult her. She would describe with accuracy their personal appearance, character, the disease from which they had suffered, and could occasionally indicate something of their history and opinions; but all the verifiable details were already known to the persons present; and there seems no reason to go beyond the hypothesis of thought-transference from the living.[9]

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[9] Podmore, *The Naturalization of the Supernatural*, p. 306.

Mrs. Piper, the chief trance medium in America, professed to receive similar impressions through the mind of her "control," the spirit of Dr. Phinuit. An example is the case of Mr. J. T. Clarke, as cited by Mr. Podmore. On arriving from England on a very brief business visit in Boston, he held a sitting with Mrs. Piper. Both were complete strangers. The notes of the séance preserved in the archives of the Society for Psychical Research[10], are too copious for quotation, and instead we give Mr. Clarke's own conclusions concerning his experience. He writes:

> "Many things that I knew, even some things I had forgotten, the clairvoyant could tell me correctly, albeit somewhat confusedly. She made all the mistakes that I should have made at the time, and her prophecies were quite as erroneous as any I might have invented myself.
>
> "One sees the contents of one's mind as in a warped and flawy mirror, or, to take the case from the other side, the secondary consciousness of the medium seems to get occasional glimpses of the panorama of one's memory, as through the rents in a veil. No doubt Phinuit [the 'control'] gives the fullest and best results when left unquestioned to tell what he can. If pressed to fill up the broad expanses of the picture remaining between the patches which he sees, he is obliged, despite his pretensions to supernatural knowledge, to take refuge in awkward evasions —in guess work, often clearly based upon hints

[10] Proceedings, Vol. VI, pp. 569-574.

> unconsciously afforded by the sitters—or, when all else fails, in incoherent and unmeaning talk. Yet, while fully recognizing these repelling features of the manifestations, I am convinced that there is enough that is genuine to prove a direct communication between mind and mind during the trance state. A single success exceeding the limits of coincidence proves the possibility; the multitude of failures merely indicates the difficulty and uncertainty."[11]

One who reads the full report of Mr. Clarke's séance, as recorded by Dr. Hodgson, will see that most of the statements made, except those which concern the future, were correct, *and that no true statement was made on any matter which was not known to Mr. Clarke.* Indeed, as he points out, one or two statements made, though failing to correspond to the facts, suggest rather strongly that the supposed Phinuit was reproducing the thoughts, conscious or latent, of Mr. Clarke himself. It seems but another example of thought-transference among the living. Multitudes of like instances may be read in the copious records of the Society for Psychical Research.

Before passing to the second class of phenomena wherein there is evidence of spirit-agencies, it may be asked what conclusion in regard to those thus far considered will appear safe and sane to the intelligent Christian? If he reflect that the psychic, firmly con-

[11] Clarke, *Ibid.*, p. 316.

vinced of being a special medium, by which spirits of the dead communicate with the living, and that, when passing by autosuggestion into the trance state, wherein his subconscious mind becomes abnormally active and capable of telepathically communicating with the subconscious minds of all persons present, he really acts in accordance with his firm belief, and speaks in the name and person of some supposed spirit; if he recall that the supposed "spirit" messages of this class of phenomena contain nothing more than what is already in the conscious or subconscious minds of the medium and sitters; if he consider that the fact of the inquirer recognizing there and then, as true the secrets revealed by the "spirit" message, is only a proof that the thoughts conveyed resided somewhere in his own conscious or subconscious mind; if, in fine, he consider the resources of the psychic by means of thought-transference from the subconscious minds of those present, which as an effect has been proved by examples innumerable, though the manner remains an unsolved problem, he will most likely, in the face of these combined facts, conclude that for the explanation of this kind of phenomena, so well exemplified in the case of the French child, there seems no necessity for supposing the presence of any preternatural agent. But in the instance of Mr. Clarke, as given above, a Christian may accept one of two opinions: first, that an invisible intelligence calling himself Dr. Phinuit, the "control"

of Mrs. Piper, was really present, as he claimed, and used her organs for conveying his messages. A spirit, as we have seen, can gain much conjectural knowledge from the subconscious mind of the medium and of the sitters and even can know its contents when they manifest it by external signs; or again, as it often happens, by internal signs, such as movements of the interior senses, or of the passions.[12] On the other hand, a Christian will more likely adhere to the other opinion, that as the message contained nothing new, nothing that was not already known to Mr. Clarke, the presence of Dr. Phinuit was only imaginary, due to the unconscious self-deception of the medium. Such cases are often difficult to decide. The truth lies in the solution of the question whether the message evidently contains information that is beyond that of all persons present. When this cannot be ascertained, prudence dictates a suspension

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[12] Moreover, if one spirit, as theologians (St. Thomas, Sum. Theol. I, 107 a 1.) teach, can know the thoughts of another spirit only when he wills to manifest it, we may reasonably infer that the controlling spirit of the medium can in like manner read the thoughts of a psychic who in deliberately entering into a trance, voluntarily yields up to the controlling spirit within him his free will and his mind, with its sensitive and intellectual faculties. The same, it seems, may be said of the attendants, who with the medium form the linked spiritistic circle; because, lapsing into the required state of passivity of mind and will, they become *en rapport* with the "control," and willingly and even anxiously submit to his power. Though this opinion be novel and tentative, we see no reason against it; for an angel's gaze upon the human soul is not impeded by man's material body, and hence, in his sight, it occupies, as a spirit, the same position as other spirits. If then the thoughts of one spirit become known to another, in accordance as he wills it, why may not the same law hold for man's spirit in regard to other spirits?

of judgment. The Christian, however, who balks at the theory of the subliminal mind and thought-transference will naturally see the presence of the preternatural, or perhaps hesitate until new light beams upon him concerning an effect which may have a twofold cause.

Wholly different is the second kind of phenomena, in which between the medium and the inquirer a third party, an invisible agent, intrudes and manifests his presence by the revelation of things unknown to anyone present. These, it seems, cannot be explained by the theory of telepathy. Of the many authentic facts we take in illustration an account of one recorded by Rev. P. H. Newnham.[13] For about eight months, Parson Newnham[14] and his wife had been experimenting in telepathy, each at a distance and invisible to the other. The planchette in use often had more than half the answer written out before the question was completed. These frequently concerned private affairs of the parson, of which his wife knew absolutely nothing, and yet she gave complete answers. These replies in innumerable instances were perfectly independent and different from the conscious intelligence of both parties, and, as a consequence, must have been the work of some inter-

[13] *Month*, Vol. LXI, p. 507.

[14] The account is derived from contemporary notes made by the parson himself. The experiments were finally abandoned on account of their prejudicial effect on Mrs. Newnham's health. Podmore, *Apparitions and Thought-Transference*, p. 92.

loping spirit agent. Since the parson's experiments show that telepathy is manifestly a fertile field open to the intrusion of wandering, but alert spirits, we shall pause briefly upon his experience.

These experiments disclose that Mrs. Newnham's planchette wrote answers to her husband's written, but unseen questions, and that these replies in more than three hundred cases differed from the thoughts in the mind of both operators, and that, therefore, they were not influenced in any way by the intellectual action of either party. As a consequence, they must be attributed to some other and third intelligent agent. "It is simply impossible," as the parson well says, "that these replies should have been suggested or composed by either of us." The questioning thought in his mind was in each instance transferred to his wife with perfect accuracy. Why, then, should the answering thought be something not in the mind of either thinker? If, as is evident, the thought must first of all be in the mind of the thinker before he can externate it, how can telepathy account for a mind transmitting a thought which it has not got? If the given information comes from the subconscious mind of the operator, he will, upon its disclosure, recognize it there and then, or upon reflection or further examination, as was exemplified in the case of Mr. Clarke. There is but one conclusion, and that lies in the presence and activity of a supernormal and preternatural agent. There are, we know,

audible sounds we cannot hear, and visible things we cannot see, without artificial aid, and so our channels of perception, remaining the same, may be roused into action by other agencies than those that are natural to us. In fact, the many experiments adduced by telepathists to prove the existence of some imaginary but inevidential supernormal faculty, rather prove the action of a supernormal or preternatural intelligence, as instanced in the numerous experiments of Rev. Mr. Newnham. Granting the accepted definition of telepathy, or thought-transference, it is impossible for a "faculty" to give an answer which is correct in itself, but differing from, and lying outside the conscious and subconscious knowledge of questioner and questioned. This insuperable difficulty however, vanishes in the presence of an external intelligent agent. The solution is, therefore, seen in the fact that some invisible intelligence, wholly distinct from the parson and his wife, intruded in their telepathic operations. Such intrusion in more than three hundred of their experiments discloses the alertness and eagerness of these vagrant and invisible agents to intermeddle in human activities. In this intrusion, as experience shows, they are wont to use all means fair or foul in their evil purpose of tempting man; and it is not surprising that they should, as occasion offers, disguise their efforts under the specious form of telepathy.

Though this theory, from the first, found for a

time many supporters, because it accounted for certain phenomena, nevertheless, in our day the best experts have come to maintain its utter failure to meet the manifest invisible activity of a distinct and independent mind and will which characterizes the third stage of spirit writing, as explained in a previous chapter. One of these eminent experts whom we cite is the Dutch scientist Dr. Van Eeden:

> "There always remain some phenomena which the most serious and scrupulous observers consider to be inexplicable according to physical laws. These are of two kinds—physical and psychical phenomena. It has always seemed to me very improbable that these are to be explained by reference to the unconscious, or to a secondary personality. And, besides, all these modern psychological terms, such as unconscious, subliminal, secondary, or tertiary personality, are they much clearer or more scientific than the terms 'demon,' 'spirit,' or 'ghost'?"[15]

Dr. R. Hodgson, a very eminent American scientific experimenter also rejects telepathy as an explanatory cause:

> "Having tried the hypothesis of telepathy from the living for several years, and the 'spirit' hypothesis also for several years, I have no hesitation in affirming with the most absolute assurance that the 'spirit' hypothesis is justified by its fruits, and the other hypothesis is not."[16]

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[15] From a Paper read at the Fourth International Congress of Psychology, at Paris, 1901.

[16] Proceedings of the S. P. R., Part 33, 1897-8.

Granting, then, the existence of telepathy, it may, says Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J., in agreement with many scientists, explain quite a number of psychic phenomena, while on the other hand it utterly fails to cover others. Moreover, in presence of phenomena that are manifestly preternatural, the theory of telepathy is halted by many insuperable difficulties. First, it demands the absurdity that we adjudge every medium—we speak not of the fraudulent—though known for moral integrity and love of truth, to become suddenly, when entranced, a cunning and deliberate cheat; for, in every instance the medium maintains that the message he conveys is not his own, but is dictated by a spirit agent. The reply of the theorists that the mediums do so because they believe it, is of no avail; for even psychics who in their normal or conscious minds do not believe in spirits, make the same claim.

Secondly, against telepathy is the well-known fact, made manifest by long experience, that individual minds are distinguished by marked characteristic traits. But this individuality telepathy would destroy by making thought-transference a common law of our mental life; for it holds that every human brain is *nolens volens* the recipient of intellectual vibrations received from all sorts of persons, with the consequent result that the mind of every man becomes, as it were, a cyclopedia of information gathered unconsciously from every source. The supposition

not only obliterates the individuality of man's subconscious mind, which is, as we have seen, the mental storehouse of all his practically-acquired knowledge, but also stands in violent contradiction to every man's conscious mental experience.

Thirdly, the theory of telepathy implies another impossibility; for, granting for the moment that the medium receives an influx of information from all persons near or distant, how can his subconscious mind on the instant distinguish in that chaotic mental mass the relevant from the irrelevant, and select with exactitude those precise pieces of information required for each particular occasion, and arrange them into one harmonious and consistent whole? Furthermore, how can the medium, in a moment of time, discover that particular person, whether near or far, whose mind can afford him the needed knowledge, and, even if found, how can he abstract it when that person is not in telepathic communication?[17]

Fourthly, even though we grant that the medium's subconscious mind may automatically reproduce certain phrases of foreign languages telepathically received, but of which his conscious mind knows nothing, that surely will not enable him in the trance to write or speak correctly, intelligently, and fluently divers foreign languages, of which, in his waking state, he knows not a word. Yet such performances

[17] Vid. Raupert, *Spiritistic Phenomena*, p. 25.

are sometimes observed, as instanced in the case of Judge Edmond's daughter, who often for an hour at a time spoke with ease and fluency in nine different languages, of which, outside the trance, she was entirely ignorant. Another example is narrated by Mr. J. Malcolm Bird, associate editor of the *Scientific American*. "The medium was a Scotch laborer of low education and with a decided bur in his speech. Though he absolutely knew no French, his 'control' spoke it well and fluently, and with no trace of Scottish accent."[18]

Fifthly, the hypothesis overtaxes man's credulity; for it postulates such wondrous powers for the human mind as are wholly inconceivable, and which in many cases fall little short of omniscience. It creates a sort of super-ghost, a Frankenstein monster in the psychic order, which is incomparably more difficult to reconcile with cosmic laws than the survival of the soul after death. In a rational preference we rather adopt Dr. Schuster's parable and consider that the red flames around the sun are what they appear. We may well close this part of our subject with the ironical remarks of Dr. Prince:[19]

> "Of course we can hypothesize a telepathy which works by relays all over the world, peeps into books and whispers to the embryo all that

[18] *New York Times*, June 25, 1923.

[19] Principal Research Officer, American Society for Psychical Research.

ever happened since Adam. We can suppose a cosmic reservoir where the thoughts of all the ages are slopping about and where the psychic can draw up exactly such fish as she needs. Or that the vibrations of all thoughts ever thought in a building are in its walls ready to impinge on a sensitive brain and convey information. Or that Deity is operating a great wireless station expressly in order to supply data. All these hypotheses, however, are speculations flying loose without the standing room of any ascertained facts, and simply testify to the ingenuity of imagination, and, granting that any of them is true, it simply lets us fall from the frying-pan into the fire of the supernormal."[20]

Our conclusion, then, is twofold: first, that telepathy, which is accepted by many as an acknowledged fact, for which science has found no explanation, may account for certain phenomena that do not reach the preternatural; secondly, that it wholly fails to explain other phenomena in which are manifest the presence and activity of invisible intellectual agents. Our next step is to show that such agents exhibit a personality distinct from, and independent of, the medium, and therefore to them and not to telepathy, the phenomena must be ascribed.

We are here concerned solely with those preternatural effects which have been approved as indubitably genuine, and which we cannot reject, un-

[20] *Scientific American*, July, 1922, p. 7.

less, like sceptics, we also reject all well-attested human evidence. The truth, however, concerning the objective reality of such phenomena does not bind a Christian as a matter of faith. He must weigh each on its own evidential merits, as he does any other historic fact. Nevertheless, much of the evidence offered has, in general, been viewed by theologians as sufficient to prove that there exist certain spiritistic occurrences which cannot be explained on purely natural grounds. But the Church, though allowing fully for their possibility, does not in any way commit herself to their acceptance or rejection. She lets each claim stand or fall on its own proper evidence, and only when an alleged phenomenon has been shown to be genuinely preternatural, does she ascribe it to evil spirits. In confirmation of Scriptural teaching, experience throughout ancient and modern times places beyond doubt the fact that invisible spirit agencies exist; that under certain conditions they can give objective evidence of their presence, and, by means of various practises, can sensibly communicate with persons who willingly enter into an illicit intercourse with them.

That these invisible agents, present and active in spiritistic phenomena, are personalities distinct and different from the medium, is attested by divers well-established premises, which exclude telepathy as an explanatory cause.

First, the control's strong and, in certain cases,

persistent opposition to the will of the medium is manifested in conflicting thoughts, antagonistic principles, and notions of the moral order. Though we have already given examples of spirit-writings tainted by coarse and lascivious language, or blasphemous expressions, all abhorrent and hitherto unknown to the operator, it is well to summon further one or more other witnesses. Of this frequent contrariness of mind and morals, Dr. Vanzano, a famed Italian investigator, writes:

> "We see that for the execution of these manifestations a new personality and also a new will must have intervened, independently of our own, and in manifest opposition to the will of the medium; a will, the genesis of which is unknown to us."[21]

A luminous example is adduced by Dr. Hudson:

> "A gentleman of this city, having developed the power of automatic writing, found that the spirit which moved his hand to write told him many things of which he was ignorant, and gave many remarkable exhibitions of powers in proof of its independent action and personality. A surprising feature was that the spirit soon began to assume a sort of dictatorship over his daily conduct and in lines which he had least reason to anticipate. For instance, though he was not particularly devoted to music, his 'control' insisted on his going to concerts oftentimes to his great

[21] *Annals of Psychical Science*, Aug., 1907.

inconvenience. Whenever the 'control' desired any indulgence, the gentleman was apprised of the fact by a decided sensation in his right arm and hand which he soon learned to recognize as the sign of the 'control's' wish to communicate in writing. He often felt the impulse while walking the streets, and the 'control' by writing on a tablet would direct him to go, perhaps to an adjoining street to listen to a hand-organ. Sometimes he was urged to indulgences which were decidedly in opposition to his moral principles, and so persistent were these requests that he abandoned further communications in writing."[22]

Secondly, in these preternatural phenomena, the medium in trance is obsessed by the "control" and through his aid exhibits extremely keen sensibilities, and even new and superior mental powers. The obsessing spirit, using his organs of speech or hand in writing, not only speaks or writes in languages that are wholly unknown to him or her in the normal or conscious state, but also gives information concerning absent persons and occurrences in distant places, which could not possibly be acquired by natural means. Many such authenticated effects are found in the voluminous records of the Society for Psychical Research. It will suffice here to recall the case of Judge Edmonds' daughter, as well as that of the Scotch laborer, already mentioned in the present chapter.

[22] *Scientific Demonstration of a Future Life*, p. 231.

Thirdly, the action of an independent spirit of a superior mind is again disclosed in youthful mediums. It is asserted that some, though unable to speak correctly or write freely in the normal state, nevertheless when under the "control" in trance, rapidly covered many sheets of paper with spirit-communications, the script and matter of which was far beyond their years. Under the influence of a superior intelligence, they invariably displayed a mind abnormally mature in a culture which they could naturally acquire only through a prolonged process of education and a wide experimental knowledge of the world.

Fourthly, another and most striking proof is correspondence as carried on by mediums unknown to each other and in widely separated localities. Such phenomena, in which we see the coordination of messages and the unifying control of divers mediums in distant places, best of all indicate the preternatural action of an independent mind, seeking to furnish proof of its own distinct personality. The force of the argument is best exposed in an example quoted by Dr. H. Carrington, a celebrated member of the Society for Psychical Research. He writes:

> "In the case of the late F. W. H. Myers, a message was given through a private medium in England (a lady and teacher in Cambridge University) and finished three days later through Mrs. Piper, in Boston, the spirits coming back

with the remark: 'I am afraid I did not make myself clear three days ago with reference to so and so; what I meant was this . . . ,' and the message was completed in more intelligible form."

Mr. Myers had, during life, devoted much time to psychic research, and his widow is still keenly interested in the same. We learn, however, that she did not believe in the authenticity of the communications which purported to come from the disembodied spirit of her late husband. In this we commend her common sense; for if those messages were really preternatural they could not come from him, as we shall see later, but from some impersonating spirit.

Fifthly, again a distinct and different personality is shown in physical phenomena of a complex nature, which are done intelligently, and directed independently of the knowledge or consent of the medium. The invisible agent sometimes suddenly produces physical objects, such as paintings, drawings, and writings, in a manner and perfection beyond the ability of the medium, and exhibits them for a definite aim and purpose. After witnessing the séances of Eusapia Palladino, in which, among other things, she modeled *bas-reliefs* in an instant, a thing impossible in normal conditions, Professor Lombroso writes: "I felt compelled to yield to the conviction that spiritistic phenomena, if due in great part to the influence of the medium, are likewise

attributable to the influence of extra-terrestrial existences."[23]

The testimony of Sir Oliver Lodge cannot be lightly set aside, when, as an eminent physicist, he speaks on a matter purely physical. In reference to sittings without a medium in his own family circle, he affirms that certain mechanical movements, which he repeatedly witnessed, were physically impossible by muscular effort of anyone present. He writes:

> "The movements of the table were not only intelligent, but were sometimes such as apparently could not be accomplished by any normal application of muscular force, however unconsciously such a force might be exerted by anyone in contact with the table."[24]

Sixthly, an independent spirit is seen at work in amateur, as well as in advanced mediums. In the latter the "control" constantly and universally repudiates a common identity, and insists upon its own personality; namely, the soul of a certain deceased person. Even the talking table will personify itself, and the hand of the automatic writer will frequently assert its separate individuality, and give its own name as distinct from that of the medium. The "control," impersonating some disembodied soul, will, in the person of the unconscious medium, mimic his ways of speaking, his gestures, his external

[23] *Grand Magazine*, Feb., 1901.
[24] *Raymond*, p. 218.

features, and often show an intimate knowledge of the life and family affairs of the deceased.

The same is true of amateurs of unquestioned good faith, who in their experiments in the home circle were keenly alive to the danger of exercising unconscious muscular pressure. Over and over again, have they most positively declared that they were often conscious of a distinct struggle between two controlling spirits, each having a marked personality and a characteristic handwriting. In most cases it was shown that the intelligence which guided their movements, seemed distinct from the consciousness of any of the sitters. Correct answers were given to questions which often involved knowledge not possessed by anyone present.[25]

From all these reasons mentioned above, it is manifest that there are some phenomena which cannot be explained on the theory of the subconscious mind and telepathy, but must be attributed to a personality distinct from, and independent of, the medium, and we now turn to examine the identity of these invisible agents of Spiritism.

[25] Vid. *Month*, Vol. CXXIX, p. 232.

CHAPTER XII

IDENTIFICATION OF SPIRITS

HAVING thus far seen that neither the subconscious mind nor telepathy can account for many psychical phenomena in which there is manifestly present an unseen intellectual agent whose personality is clearly distinct from that of the medium, we now proceed to consider the identity of these invisible agents. Their identification is the paramount problem that has confronted spiritists at all times. Their assumption that the invisible communicating agent is really, as he claims, the soul of some particular person who once lived our life on earth, surely calls for some substantiation before it can deserve the consideration of rational minds. It is, indeed, for spiritists a momentous question, for upon its proof or disproof stands or falls the whole superstitious cult. The question, nevertheless, has thus far defied any positive and indubitable solution, and still remains to plague the unsophisticated spiritist.

Even if we grant that invisible intelligences do communicate with the living, how can spiritists prove that these are the souls of the dead? Have we not incontrovertible evidence that besides disembodied souls there are multitudes of other kinds of spirits,

many good, whose intent is charitable; and many evil, whose intent is wicked? That the spirits of Spiritism are human souls is surely not proved by rapping, or by table-tilting, or by the unconscious mutterings of hysterical mediums. Like, and even greater things, can be done by other spirits that are in nature, and by powers far superior to the souls of the dead.

Sir Oliver Lodge, the chief apostle of the spiritistic cult in the English-speaking world, openly confesses that the question of identity is a fundamental one. But what is the conclusive proof he offers? "The controlling spirit," he affirms, "proves his identity mainly by the reproduction in speech or writing of facts which belong to his memory and not to that of the medium." Such a proof is, however, worthless to all save benighted spiritists, for the reason that the subconscious mind of the medium and her mystic circle may, as was previously exposed, be to some extent open to the superior intellects of crafty spirits, who can select therefrom facts and circumstances known only to the sitters, and, by force of which, they can safely masquerade as the souls of departed friends.

Against Sir Oliver is the startling testimony of many famous experimenters who admit and bewail the fact that "impersonations of the dead by deceiving spirits are a well-known, frequent, and admitted phenomenon in connection with spirit manifestations."

These lying spirits when detected in certain instances, have shamelessly confessed their deception. In illustration we quote Dr. H. Carrington's experience in sittings with Mrs. Piper, as found in the records of the Society for Psychical Research. He writes:

> "I gained the distinct impression throughout the sittings that instead of the spirits of the personages who claimed to be present, I was dealing with an exceedingly sly, cunning, tricky and deceitful intelligence which threw out chance remarks, fishing guesses, and shrewd inferences, leaving the sitter to pick them up and elaborate if he would. If anything could make me believe in the doctrine of evil and lying spirits, it would be the sittings with Mrs. Piper. I do not for one moment implicate the normal Mrs. Piper in this criticism."[1]

The famous Dr. Brownson, who, before his conversion to the Faith, had tried the many "isms," and among them Spiritism, has left us in his *Spirit Rapper*, the result of his researches. His views are those of every Christian:

> "Undoubtedly the supposed dead bring pretended proofs of their identity, but these proofs are in no wise conclusive. They remind you of peculiarities which you and the dead alone know; the mysterious pencil imitates his writing. But the devils were the invisible witnesses of these

[1] *Black Magic*, p. 83.

peculiarities; doubtless they can skilfully counterfeit handwriting, they that work prodigies much more extraordinary. And they know enough of the human heart to know that in persuading you a loved one is there conversing with you, they will secure a better hearing when, with pretended simplicity, they boldly declare that Catholic teaching is deceptive."

Mr. Maxwell, a materialist and non-spiritist, who spent many years in scientific experimentation, reached the same conclusion as did Professor Aksakoff. "The latter," says the Doctor, "is one of the cleverest and most enlightened of spiritists, and acknowledges that one *is never certain* of the identity of the communicating intelligence at a spiritistic sitting."[2]

To a Christian, above all others, there is from the very first a well-founded presumption against the claim of spiritists, and, therefore, he must demand of them rational and most convincing proofs. He knows that the modern medium is but the reincarnation of the ancient pythoness and necromancer, who all alike consulted spirits which they deemed the souls of the dead. He further knows that the evil practises continued, openly or furtively, down through the centuries; that it was inveighed against by the early Fathers, and Doctors of the Church; and that theologians from St. Augustine to St. Thomas

[2] *Metaphysical Phenomena*, p. 8.

and to Bellarmine have dealt with the superstition. All agree that the spirits who respond to the call of pythoness, or necromancer, or medium, are not really the souls of the dead, but evil spirits, "angels of darkness," who "transform themselves into angels of light,"[3] the more easily to deceive men, and cause them to accept the new gospel of Anti-Christ.

The Christian further knows that Spiritism is expressly condemned by a positive law of Almighty God himself, and that, therefore, its invisible agents must be spirits in rebellion against Him, such as the fallen angels, who because of their wickedness are ever, in perversity of purpose, anxious to answer the unholy call of spiritists. They are allowed by divine dispensation to wander through our atmosphere with liberty to test men's virtues, and align them into the two hostile camps of Christ and Anti-Christ.

Furthermore, the Christian knows that these evil spirits in their fall from heaven, lost only their supernatural gifts, retaining all the powers native to their purely natural being, and these they can use when not restrained by an all-ruling Providence. The Christian, again, knows from Divine Revelation that such restraint may be removed, as a penalty in regard to certain unbelievers who, rejecting God's word, and scorning His express prohibition against the invocation of the dead, deliberately and volun-

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[3] 2 *Cor.*, xi.

tarily subject themselves to the power of these invisible masquerading spirits.

Every Christian, however, is safe in a citadel impregnable, a bulwark of faith against the wiles and deceits of these invisible powers of evil. They can deceive only those who, for flouting the Divine inhibition, and rejecting the supernatural truths of Christianity, are in penalty abandoned by the Lord, to the desires of their hearts. "Because," says the Apostle, "they receive not the love of the Truth that they might be saved. Therefore God shall send them the operation of error, to believe lying."[4]

The Christian's position, so well established, is further strengthened by the testimony of many who have made a thorough study of the matter. For obvious reasons we shall quote only non-Catholic authorities. Mr. Stainton Moses,[5] an ex-Anglican parson and recognized light among spiritists, thus writes of the lying agencies at séances:

> "Some spirits will assent to leading questions, and, possessed apparently with the desire to please, or unconscious of the import of what they say, or without moral consciousness, *will say anything.* Such motiveless lying bespeaks a deeply evil nature. . . . Such an impostor, acting with an air of sincerity, must be as Satan clothed in light."

Of no less weight is the testimony of Dr. L. P.

[4] 2 *Tim.*, ix.
[5] "Spirit Identity," apud *New Black Magic*, p. 43.

Jacks, who in his Presidential Address to the Society for Psychical Research in 1917 said:

> "Take the question of imposture. Mediums are not the only impostors. How about the communicators? Are they masquerading? You can have no absolute proof that there is no masquerading on the other side: I think that the whole meaning of personal identity needs to be very carefully thought out and considered before we begin to produce evidence in favor of personal identity."

But stranger still is the confession of the active propagandist, Sir Conan Doyle:

> "Guessing on the part of the 'control,' there might be—there sometimes was—and occasionally there were direct impersonations; but that is part of what we might expect—at any rate, it is part of what we got."[6]

Such admissions are deadly to his cult. If at times, as he confesses, he discovered direct impersonations by these masquerading spirits, may we not reasonably assume, in absence of proof to the contrary, that these lying spirits did the same on other occasions? At least, he naïvely confesses, "It is what we might expect." If that is what he got, and what he expected, how can he, as an honest man, solicit Christians to abandon their divinely-established creed for his cult of lying, impersonating spirits?

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[6] *New Black Magic*, p. 85.

A far greater authority is the world-famous astronomer, M. Flammarion. Unwilling to admit the fundamental claim of Spiritists, that human souls were the agencies of mediumistic communications, he devoted many years to scientific researches in the hope of obtaining rational proofs for the solution of the question. His conclusions follow:

> "As to beings different from ourselves—what may their nature be? Of this we cannot form any idea. Souls of the dead? This is far from being demonstrated. The innumerable observations which I have collected during more than forty years, all *prove to me the contrary*. No satisfactory identification has been made. That souls survive the destruction of the body, I have not a shadow of a doubt. But that they manifest themselves by the processes employed in séances, the experimental method has not yet given as absolute proof. Up to this day I have sought *in vain* for certain proofs of personal identity through mediumistic communications."[7]

This emphatic position of M. Flammarion is that of every serious and open-minded student of the subject. All agree that we know to-day of nothing that can with certainty establish the identity of those invisible agents. In presence of this insuperable difficulty, we surely have sufficient reason to ask why, if these spirit-agencies be honest and truthful, if they be the souls of departed friends, as they claim, why

[7] "Psychic Forces," apud *New Black Magic*, p. 106.

do they not furnish the all-important proof so anxiously looked for? It is surely within their power, and it alone can brush aside all doubt. This demand, most deadly to the cult, has always surged upon thoughtful minds. It is happily emphasized by Mr. Maeterlinck as follows:

> "Do they [the spirits] not yet know that the sign which will prove to us that they survive is to be found, not with us, but with them on the other side of the grave? Why do they come back with empty hands and empty words? Is that what one finds when one is steeped in infinity?
>
> "All things considered, there is the same characteristic inability to bring us the veriest particle of truth or knowledge of which no vestige can be found in a living brain or in a book written on this earth. And yet it is inconceivable that there should not somewhere exist a knowledge that is not ours, and truths other than those which we possess here below.
>
> "Beyond our last hour, is it all bare, shapeless and dim? If it be so, let them [the spirits] tell us; and the evidence of darkness will at least possess a grandeur that is all too absent from these cross-examining methods."[8]

Again the same author complains of the many spirit messages concerning human souls on "the other side," which picture an impossible spirit-life in the

[8] "Life After Death," *Fortnightly Review*, Sept. et Oct., 1913.

spirit-world, differing but little from our present material existence. Mr. Maeterlinck continues:

> "Of what use is it to die, if all life's trivialities continue? Is it really worth while to have passed through the terrifying gorges which open on the eternal fields, in order to remember that we had a great uncle called Peter, or that our cousin Paul was afflicted with varicose veins and gastric complaint? . . . Without demanding a great miracle, one would, nevertheless, think that we had a right to expect from a mind which nothing now enthralls some other discourse than that which was avoided when it was still subject to matter . . . why do they [the spirits] speak to us so seldom of the future? And for what reason, when they do venture upon it, are they mistaken with such disheartening regularity?"[9]

In feelings of disappointment bordering on disgust, Mr. Maeterlinck in his work, the *Unknown Guest*, further complains of these supposed dear friends and relatives returning to earth to converse with us, not of things of supreme human and still more of eternal interest, but of insipid trifles and inanities which surely cannot longer concern human souls that, after abandoning their chrysalis of clay, have passed enfranchised to a higher and purely spiritual life. Hence he writes:

> "They [the spiritists] see the dead crowding around like wretched puppets indissolubly at-

[9] *Ibid.*, Sept., 1913.

> tached to the insignificant scene of their death by the thousand little threads of insipid memories and infantile hobbies. They are supposed to be here, blocking up our homes, more abjectly human than if they were still alive, vague, inconsistent, garrulous, derelict, futile, and idle, tossing hither and thither their desolate shadows, which are being slowly swallowed up by silence and oblivion, busying themselves incessantly with what no longer concerns them, but almost incapable of doing us a real service, so much so that, in short, they would end by persuading us that death serves no purpose, that it neither purifies, nor exalts, nor brings deliverance."[10]

There is but one answer to this rational complaint. These spirits are not what they seem. True love and friendship are not entombed with man's lifeless clay. If departed loved ones could return at will, they would do so, and manifest their abiding affection as far as allowable. They would, moreover, do what they alone can do, identify themselves beyond all doubt, and satisfy our yearning after knowledge of the future life. But they cannot ordinarily return at will to earth. Christians know that these counterfeiting spirits of darkness are actuated, not by love, but by hatred of man, and, therefore, they cannot disclose their true nature and purpose without frustrating their design of misleading men. Behind a mask of deceit, which is almost impenetrable be-

[10] *Op cit.*

cause invisible, they can the better prepare pitfalls and weave their webs in which human flies in wilful blindness and credulity will entangle themselves. "Having eyes, they see not; and having ears, they hear not the things that are of God."

"We know but little more of God than men know on earth," affirm those crafty spirits. This falsehood, so evident to Christians, does not seem to startle spiritists. They fail to realize its absurdity. The human soul, whether good or bad, once enfranchised from corruptible matter, enters upon an immaterial life proper to the spirit-world, where in the light of eternity it attains a new mode and range of knowledge, which is common to every disembodied soul. Again, the insistence of these spirits upon anti-christian teaching, the making little of vice and virtue, and the substitution of the merely natural for the supernatural, both here and hereafter, are all, in brief, infallible marks of the presence and purpose of spirits of evil.

How mortals when rejecting God's revelation, may be wilfully blind to truth, is exemplified in the fatuous proof which, in all seriousness, Sir Conan Doyle offers in attestation of the identity and veracity of these impersonating spirits. "The body of fresh doctrine comes," he says, "in the main, through automatic writing when the hand of the medium is controlled either by an alleged human being or an alleged angel." Now, the word "alleged" specially

signifies something asserted but not proved nor admitted, and as such it applies to Sir Conan's disjunctive sentence. Who are these "alleged" human souls? Are they souls in bliss, or goblins damned! Why does he not decide? Again, who are his "alleged angels"? Are they of heaven or of hell? They may be the latter, for all he knows, for certainly they cannot be holy angels. No sane man can possibly hold that God's glorious celestial spirits will respond to the call of a sorry, very sorry lot of mediums, whose business is condemned by His positive law against communicating with the dead. Who, then, remain but fallen angels? Their Scripturally-revealed purpose of deceiving and seducing man from his allegiance to heaven's King, accords with the invariable antichristian teaching of these invisible agents and the moral evils consequent upon communication with them. But, proceeds Sir Conan: "How do we know that these invisible intelligences are really from the beyond?" His answer is a fine example of evasion. The question at issue is not to prove that the invisible agent is from the beyond. That we may readily grant. But the one and important point to prove is that they are the disembodied souls they claim to be. Let us, however, take his argument:

> "The answer [he says] must be that we require signs which we can test before we accept assertions which we cannot test. These signs are, as in the case of Stainton Moses, when the

> messages are accompanied by a number of abnormal gifts. If [for example, the disembodied soul of] Miss Julia Ames can tell Mr. Stead things in her own earth-life of which he could not have had cognizance, and if these things are shown, when tested, to be true, then one is more inclined to think that those things which cannot be tested are true also." *New Black Magic*, p. 25.

Behold the compelling argument which the great propagandist offers us in all seriousness as the certain means of identifying the personality of Miss Julia Ames. Unfortunately, he ignores the fact that the entranced medium has a fertile source of information in the subconscious minds of the sitters, and, furthermore, that the same source is open to impersonating spirits. Again, what Miss Ames can do, evil spirits can also do more readily and extensively. The weakness of the argument must be evident to every thoughtful mind. In brief, if an invisible intelligence, claiming to be the defunct soul of Miss Julia, reveals through a medium certain things which are found to be true on testing, then we may also believe *all other things* it asserts even though we cannot test them.

We also reason *a pari:* if a man of unknown personality, whom I cannot identify, and of whose veracity and moral character I am in doubt or in perfect ignorance, accosts me and tells me a few trifling truths, then I am warranted in believing, in full safety, all his other statements no matter how strange

and incredible. On the same principle, a liar might tell a stranger a few truths for the purpose of winning his confidence for undoubted credibility. Wise men, however, are not deceived by such easy trickery. Surely, the emptiness of Sir Conan's solid argument for the identification of spirits need detain us no longer.

It is well to note here, by way of emphasis, the remarkable instance of a controlling spirit that masqueraded for several years as the disembodied soul of a French physician. The medium was Mrs. Piper of Boston, whose séances were under the guidance of Dr. Hodgson, or other members of the Society for Psychical Research. One of her earlier "controls" was Dr. Phinuit, who exclusively employed the medium's voice for his communications, and, when in control, exhibited most vividly his own personality, not only in style of language, which was that of a Frenchman speaking English, but also in a voice which was his own, and not that of the normal Mrs. Piper. He, moreover, gave many particulars concerning his birth, education, and life in Paris.

The séance usually took the form of a dialogue between Phinuit and the sitters, in which he mentioned their relatives and friends and answered questions regarding them. Often he enumerated the various members of the sitter's family, giving their full names and relationship, their character, features, dress, occupation and incidents of their life. He

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disclosed the present condition of the departed—what they now looked like, wherewith they were occupied, whether they were happy, and so forth. Though his statements were at times perfectly clear and given without hesitation, they were on other occasions rather confused, and showed considerable fishing. Again some statements were correct in detail, while others were incorrect and often unintelligible, both in details, as well as in their whole substance.[11]

Though this wily impersonator succeeded in imposing, for a time, even upon scientific researchers, a few there were who remained strongly sceptical, and, while admitting the Doctor's personality to be distinct from that of Mrs. Piper's, they discovered, from the study and comparison of the notes of the many séances, that he was an arch-hypocrite and cunning impostor. If sometimes felicitous in diagnosing the ailment of those who consulted him, his medical knowledge was, nevertheless, extremely limited; he did not know the Latin names of the various drugs which he prescribed, nor recognize common medical herbs when shown to him, and, in brief, he gave no evidence of possessing any scientific knowledge of medicine. What was more surprising was the forceful circumstance that, while professing to be the spirit of a French doctor, his knowledge of his native tongue extended only to a few simple

[11] Liljencrants, *Spiritism and Religion*, p. 102.

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phrases and a slight accent, which was at times serviceable in disguising a bad shot at a proper name.

The ignorance of his mother tongue, this French doctor of Paris foolishly attempted to explain by the circumstances of his having lived for some years at Metz, where, in conversing with many English residents, he had forgotten his French. Later he invented a more plausible excuse in the fact that he was obliged to use the brain of the medium, and therefore could manifest no more familiarity with French than she possessed. When pressed concerning the similarity of his name to that of another French spirit doctor, he conveniently remembered that his real name was not, after all, Phinuit, but Alaen. Under further strenuous questions, he became uncertain whether he was born at Marseilles or at Metz, and equally uncertain whether he passed the latter part of his life at Metz or Paris. In fine, upon diligent inquiry concerning particulars he had given about his birth, education, and life at Paris, no trace was found of a person who had lived and died as he stated.[12]

Concerning this masquerading spirit of an imaginary Dr. Phinuit, we give the conclusions of Mr. Leaf, a member of the Society for Psychical Research:

> "His own word does not, in view of his moral standard, apart from other considerations, carry

[12] Podmore, *The Naturalization of the Supernatural*, p. 307.

even the presumption of veracity, nor has a single one of the many statements he had made as to his life on earth proved capable of verification. On the other side, his complete ignorance of French is a positive ground for disbelieving him, and which he has never been able to explain."

In reviewing the case of Dr. Phinuit, it is worthy of note that he wrote and spoke intelligently, and connectedly through the organism of the entranced Mrs. Piper, gave information on subjects wholly outside the reach of her mind, introduced the deceased friends and relatives of persons unexpectedly brought to the sittings, and exhibited all the marks of a consistent, continuous, and entirely independent individuality. Of this fact one of the prominent observers wrote:

"Whatever or whoever Phinuit may be, he is a well-established personality, so strongly marked and with such definite characteristics, that Mrs. Piper in her trance state *is* Phinuit and no longer Mrs. Piper. It would be difficult to imagine two personalities so absolutely dissimilar as Mrs. Piper, gentle, simple, womanly, with a somewhat narrow range of interests, and Dr. Phinuit, blustering, masculine, tricky, and prevaricating."[13]

Had Mrs. Piper's "spirit-control" chosen to impersonate the disembodied soul of a real French physician whose life-story could be traced on earth,

[13] Apud *Modern Spiritism*, p. 136.

instead of an altogether fictitious character, he would have had fair sailing even before the adverse winds of the persistent plaguing questions of sceptical inquirers; for these impersonating spirits, in their intellectual powers and activities, which are vastly superior to man's, have at command, as was shown in previous pages, every source of information that exists on earth in regard to the dead, and therefore they can, if they will, fortify themselves against all possible cross-examinations.

But the case of Dr. Phinuit was wholly different. Being a purely fictitious character who never had any human existence on our planet, as the scientific experimenters discovered by many tests, the impersonating spirit was at a great disadvantage. Such spirits do not know contingent future events, and he could not definitely foreknow the precise nature of the cross-questions which the persistent examiners would force upon him, and therefore in the support of his fundamental lie, was obliged to resort to many other lies in succession, in order to meet the insistent queries of his sceptical examiners. The result was logically like that of all confirmed human liars, and he finally enmeshed himself beyond extrication in innumerable contradictions. Lying, we know from Divine Revelation, is a characteristic of these fallen spirits, who prefer falsehood to truth, and seem to revel in weaving deceits whereby they may entrap foolish or unwary mortals.

We have seen that several eminent spiritists regretfully admit the presence of many a Dr. Phinuit at séances. If spiritists cannot with certainty identify the personality of their invisible intelligences, how much greater is their quandary when confronted by the frequent mendacities of impersonating spirits? If at times they speak truths, is it not, as Scripture tells us, to gain our confidence in furtherance of latent ulterior purposes? Banquo was orthodox in his words:

> "But 'tis strange;
> And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
> The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
> Win us with honest trifles, to betray us
> in deepest consequences."

Sir Oliver Lodge, an eminent spiritist, had been long dealing with leading mediums, and upon the death of his son he repaired to certain professionals, especially to Mrs. Leonard. The sorrow-stricken, if unbelievers, lack the consolation springing from Christian faith, and sometimes seek it at séances, where in gloomy affliction they not infrequently fall victims to the wiles of impersonating spirits. The danger of such people when their minds are darkened by grief over lost loved ones, has been always recognized by Catholics. Prince Hamlet, a Catholic, knew it well:

"The spirit I have seen
May be the devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape: yea, and perhaps
Out of *my weakness and my melancholy*
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuse me to damn me. I'll have grounds
More relative than this."[14]

That Sir Oliver Lodge met the same fate as other afflicted mortals under the same circumstances, is the common opinion of non-spiritists and of numerous scientific investigators of psychic phenomena. An unbiased critical reader of *Raymond* will find nothing therein to convince him that Sir Oliver was by means of those professional mediums really in communication with the disembodied soul of his son. His alleged proofs are unconvincing, and can be explained according to other established principles.

When we look for substantial proofs that phenomena which are manifestly preternatural, are the work of disembodied souls and not of other spirits, we are met by Sir Conan Doyle with a demand for dogmatic faith in "unbiased experts." And who are his experts? They are benighted spiritists who assuredly have seen no more than ourselves of these invisible agencies. But, says Sir Conan: "In all sciences we agree to take the word of unbiased experts."[15] Spiritism, we reply, is not a science. All the sciences deal only with visible material things,

[14] *II*, 2.
[15] *American*, Sept., 1922.

and Spiritism, on the contrary, is concerned only with the invisible and immaterial.

Sir Conan, furthermore, is unfortunate in his similes: "Very few of us," he says, "have seen the rings of Saturn, yet we commonly accept the fact that they are there." Very true; for Saturn, unlike spirits, is very material and very visible, and as such is seen and studied by astronomers. When with his material eyes like these scientists, Sir Conan can see his invisible spirit agents, then we shall gladly accord him equal standing with them.

But, insists Sir Conan, "We have heard the voices of the dead." Surely, he heard a voice, but was it the voice of the medium, or of a disembodied soul, or of an evil spirit? He of course assumes the second, but where is his proof? "Oh," he says, "we have seen their writing." Very true, he saw some writing, but we cannot allow his assumption. What he saw was the hand of the medium writing. How, then, does he prove that it was not her script, but that of a disembodied soul, when we know that impersonating evil spirits can manipulate the planchette and imitate any writing?

Sir Conan Doyle, in his tour of propaganda in America, was wont to exhibit spirit-photographs as an irresistible proof of the verity of his cult. Though, as published in (the London) *Science* his spirit-photographer was exposed in fraudulent practise by the Magic Circle of London, a society of professional

magicians, he still cherishes his credulity—a fact which is a well-known characteristic of all spiritists. He is aware, no doubt, that sprit-photography is a type of evidence which is very powerful with the man in the street, especially when assured by Sir Conan that *his* are, beyond the possibility of a doubt, the spirit forms of his departed loved ones. It is almost seeing for oneself, and seeing, we are told, is believing. For this reason, and for the fact that Sir Conan in his lectures is accustomed to flourish in triumph sundry spirit-photographs before the staring, credulous eyes of his audiences, we deem it almost imperative to narrate the following exposure of his own trusted spirit-photographers at Crewe. The matter closely touches Sir Conan himself; for in absolute credulity he had boldly challenged all critics in the following words:

> "I have myself been at Crewe, and have had results which would be amazing were it not that familiarity blunts the mind to miracles. Three marked plates, brought by myself, and handled, developed, and fixed by no hand but mine, gave psychic 'extras.' In each case I saw the extra in the negative when it was still wet in the dark room. . . . I trust that I make it clear that no hand but mine ever touched this plate, nor did I ever lose sight of it for a second, save when it was in the carrier which was conveyed straight back to the dark room and there opened. What has any critic to say to that?"

Surely that was a powerfully convincing argument. There were the facts attested by an eye-witness. Who would dare contradict him? Well, unfortunately for Sir Conan Doyle, there is a Mr. Harry Price, who has a great deal to say about his photographs. Though the exposé of one of Sir Conan's "spook-photographers," as narrated in the *Scientific American,* has been given in a previous chapter, we hope we shall be pardoned, if from the importance of the matter, we give an account of the one that occurred at Crewe and to which wide publicity was given in the columns of (the London) *Truth.* Sir Conan informs us that "When Mr. Hope and Mrs. Buxton, his trusted mediums, stand with their hands joined over the cap of the camera, they are really throwing out a misty ectoplasm from which loom up the spirit-forms that appear upon the photographic plate." This, we may note, is a mere assumption concerning something invisible.

Mr. Price, however, as an eye-witness, described the maneuvers of Sir Conan's two "experts" in more explicit terms: "While the exposures were going on, Mr. Hope and Mrs. Buxton buried their heads in the side of the black focusing cloth, as though in prayer, and kept contact with the camera, but the spirits did not seem to have been much concerned with the misty ectoplasm and the prayer." There was, indeed, no necessity; for in the dark slide which was being exposed in the camera were two plates

not belonging to the set Mr. Price had brought with him, but prepared beforehand by Mr. Hope, and provided with an "extra" before the exposure took place. Although ninety-nine men in a hundred in Mr. Price's place would have been satisfied, as Sir Conan Doyle was satisfied, and as Mr. Wynn was satisfied that the plates had been brought, handled, and developed by no other hand than theirs; in point of fact, the dark slide in the camera was *not* the dark slide into which the plates brought had been put. "The proof," says *Truth*, "is overwhelming and absolutely unanswerable." The fraud was exposed in the following manner:

> "Before keeping his appointment with Hope, Mr. Price had gone to the Imperial Dry Plate Co., and had arranged that each plate of the whole packet should be marked by means of X-rays with a section of the figure of a lion rampant [the trade-mark of the Company]. Two plates were exposed, and two negatives of the sitter [Mr. Price himself] were then taken. On one of these appeared an 'extra,' on the other only the ordinary portrait; but on neither appeared the slightest trace of *the lion rampant*. The 'extra' consisted of a woman's face with the ordinary shadowy veiling around it.
>
> "The trick by which the fraud was perpetrated was as simple as it was audacious. Mr. Price was invited into the dark room to put two of his plates into the dark slide. He did so, and was bidden meanwhile to do up the packet again. As

he was doing so, he saw Hope turn half-round, put the dark slide into his breast pocket for a moment and then take out in its place another already prepared. This fact of the substitution was made clear to Mr. Price, because he had secretly marked the dark slide which was first shown him, and when he was asked to take it back to the camera, he made an excuse to look at it, and saw that the mark was not there.

"It is noteworthy that Mr. Hope and Mrs. Buxton opened the proceedings with a short religious service. Mrs. Buxton sang the hymn 'Nearer, My God, to Thee.' Mr. Hope delivered himself of an extempore prayer, and all present joined in the 'Our Father.'"

From Mr. Hope, we turn for a special reason to another spirit-photographer whom, during his recent tour in America, Sir Conan Doyle warmly recommended to his audiences as a guarantee for the genuineness of his spirit-photographs. This "Circle," composed only of spiritists, has assumed the lofty and catchy title of the British College of Psychic Science, and has its accredited medium-photographer in the person of a Mrs. Deane. But, sad to say, she has met the same fate as other tricksters. Only recently three experts exposed to the English public her fraudulent practises. Her process was the same as that of Mr. Hope's just mentioned, and, like him and Mrs. Buxton, she invoked the Lord in Christian prayer to cloak her trickery.

On these prayerful frauds, *Truth* very reasonably comments:

> "A more nauseous picture of canting hypocrisy was never presented to the world than that of this precious pair [Mr. Hope and Mrs. Buxton] singing hymns and praying to the Almighty to bless their efforts to swindle their dupes. Stiggins was an angel of light by comparison."[16]

These sleight-of-hand performers are the kind of intermediaries to whom the spiritistic cult in its leading prophets bids us to address ourselves in order to obtain true guidance upon the deepest problems of man's mortal existence and future destiny. Since the crux of Spiritism lies in the proof or disproof of the assumption that the communicating spirits are the disembodied souls of former denizens of earth, we shall devote the following chapter to the further elucidation of the subject and to the disproof of the delusive claim.

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[16] Vid. *Examiner*, Aug. 19, 1922, p. 328.

CHAPTER XIII

CLAIMS OF SPIRITISTS UNVERIFIED

WE ARE still looking for spiritists to furnish rational proofs in support of the claim that their phenomena are the work of disembodied souls. As the claim is fundamental to the spiritistic cult, it seems to call for further examination. If we grant that certain spiritistic effects pertain to the preternatural order, we naturally seek their causes. Who, we ask, are the invisible intellectual agents behind such effects? What is their nature, character, and purpose of visitation? Are they fallen angels known as "evil spirits," or "demons," or are they the disembodied souls of the dead? If the latter, as spiritists assume, why do they not offer evidential proofs that will allay all doubts with rational minds?

Instead of proofs for their assumption, spiritists are satisfied to meet all questioners with bold reiteration that scientific men have by innumerable experiments demonstrated the survival of men's souls after death. That fact any Christian grants on other grounds, but it does not prove that such souls are the spirit-agencies at work in their phenomena. They seem ignorant of the existence of other spirits who can produce the same effects. Truth mixed with error is often more perversive than open falsehood.

Spiritists of our day especially, exemplify the axiom attributed to Julius Caesar, that men willingly believe what they wish to be true.

Many eminent scientific experimenters have, we grant, expressed the conviction that certain phenomena must be attributed to independent "spirit-agencies," but, unlike spiritists, these men of science have been very cautious in their attitude, and while expressing an opinion in accordance with the facts observed, have in no wise ventured to go beyond their sphere and decide upon the nature of these unseen agencies. In consequence, spiritists cannot honestly invoke the judgment of such scientists in support of their limping claim. Its emptiness a noted evangelist of the cult recently emphasized, though unwittingly, before a promiscuous audience, which for want of familiarity with the subject was unable to see the loopholes in his argumentation. Of them a critic wrote: "A very large proportion of those who heard Sir Conan Doyle's lecture must have gone away deeply impressed." The masses, whose learning never rises above the superficial, are always in danger of being victimized by deluded or dishonest propagandists. This fact a poet has well expressed in the now hackneyed lines.

> "A little learning is a dangerous thing:
> Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:
> There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
> And drinking largely sobers us again."

Let us drink deep at the spring of truth, as we animadvert upon the supreme argument of Spiritism's late itinerant evangelist. Sir Conan was asked:

> "What about the thousands who want some evidence in this matter, but cannot find it? They cannot talk to you, and there are few mediums. What should the man or woman do who wants to know more?
>
> "In all sciences," replied Sir Conan, "we agree to take the word of unbiased experts. The roll of scientific authorities who have investigated Spiritism, and have gone on record in its behalf, is too imposing to be any longer doubted. To be scornful in the presence of table-tippers is easy. But here is Crookes, the most eminent of British chemists; here is Wallace, the foremost naturalist of his time; here is Mayo, professor of anatomy in King's College, London; and here is Flammarion the best known of astronomers: These men are not fools. No one might dismiss their judgment by a wave of the hand without casting reflections upon his own."[1]

These words of Sir Conan must have made a deep impression upon the uninitiated in his audience. Yet, disregarding the wave of the hand, we look in vain amid that galaxy of stars for any proof that the invisible agents of Spiritism are the disembodied souls of the dead. But as Sir Conan has appealed to Caesar, then to Caesar let us go.

We must, however, prenote that the authorities cited

[1] Apud *American*, Sept., 1922, p. 68.

are eminent only in one natural science, which in no manner includes the occult or preternatural. All natural sciences are confined solely to visible and tangible things, while Spiritism, on the contrary, is concerned with the invisible and intangible, and in this very distinguishing fact lies its difficulty. Hence, since Spiritism does not fall within the sphere of the natural sciences, scientists have no more right to dogmatize upon it than has any educated layman.

Let us now examine the value of the authorities cited,—a thing Sir Conan's audience could not do at the moment—and we shall see that not one of them proves the point in question; namely, that the invisible agents of Spiritism are the souls of the dead.

In the first place, Mr. Wallace, the naturalist, says: "Spiritualistic phenomena in their entirety do not require further confirmation. They are proved quite as well as any facts are proved in other sciences."

But we reply, Spiritism is not a science! Let that, however, pass. Now, where in those words does Mr. Wallace affirm that the invisible agents of the phenomena are the souls of the dead? He asserts the facts, but assigns no cause.

Next take the second authority quoted, that of Dr. Mayo, the naturalist. "That the phenomena occur," he says, "there is overwhelming evidence, and it is too late now to deny their existence."

That they exist, we grant; but what is their cause? Dr. Mayo does not say! Here we see Sir Conan in sophistry proving a point not at issue, and neglecting the real question in dissension. Neither Mr. Wallace nor Dr. Mayo gives the least hint regarding the nature and character of those invisible intellectual agents.

Failing in these two witnesses, Sir Conan may perhaps fare better in the third. Sir William Crookes, the chemist, writes: "I have observed some circumstances which seem conclusively to point to the agency of an outside intelligence not belonging to any intelligence in the room." Here, again, not a word about the nature of these intelligences, whether human souls or evil spirits. What, in the fourth place, says Mr. Flammarion? From his book entitled *Psychic Forces,* we have already quoted a passage, wherein we see the great astronomer's utter denial of the claim of Sir Conan and of spiritists. How useless, then, are these scientific buttresses, by which he vainly seeks to support his spiritistic edifice?

But shall we summon him to testify against himself? Here are his words concerning the communicating spirits: "*Guessing* there sometimes was, and occasionally there were direct *impersonations:* but that is part of what we might expect—at any rate, it is part of what we got."

From this fictionist, let us turn to an eminent physicist, Sir Oliver Lodge. In his *Raymond* he

tells us that the possibility of telepathy made him frequently doubt the genuineness of the spirit-messages received. His mental integrity did not allow him to conceal his doubts, and accordingly he writes concerning an important revelation made through "Feda," the supposed "control" of his medium: "What it does not exclude is telepathy. It was exactly like an experiment conducted for thought-transference at a distance." Thus, Sir Oliver, the acknowledged leader of spiritists, affirms his serious doubts concerning the personality of communicating spirits.

But much more pronounced is the testimony of other eminent men, all members of the Society for Psychical Research, whom we have quoted in the preceding chapter, against the claim of spiritists. There is Professor Flammarion, who devoted forty years to psychic research; Mr. Stainton Moses, the greatest luminary of Spiritism in his day; Professor Jacks, the president of the Society for Psychical Research in 1917; and Mr. Maeterlinck. But why expect these invisible agents to remove their mask when exposure would defeat their purpose? Dr. Carrington testifies to his experience as follows:

> "Answers to certain questions suggested that the intelligence operating was of a low, cunning, malicious, lying, and altogether detestable character."—In report to S. P. R.—apud *New Black Magic*, p. 83.

This granted, how can men of sense believe that the departed souls of their loved ones return to earth to treat their friends in such a manner? In these authorities we have the unbiased judgment of honored specialists regarding the futility of the spiritistic claim for the identity of communicating spirits. Let propagandists cease their boasted claim, and first think out carefully all that personal identity implies, and then let them gather proofs in favor of their assumption that these invisible intelligences are the souls of the dead.

It has, no doubt, occurred to many Christian minds that the insuperable difficulty which confronts spiritists in every effort at identification, necessarily arises from the very nature and purpose of the invisible agents of their phenomena. If these were really the souls of the dead, they surely would, if they could, disclose to beloved friends their true human personality; while, on the other hand, if these spirits be fallen angels, they can only hope to attain their evil purpose by concealing their true nature and character behind the mask of some favorable disguise, such as love and friendship.

Sir Oliver Lodge admits[2] that every attempt to obtain information concerning the manner of life in the spirit-world, or to lessen human difficulties about religious conceptions, or to acquire larger

[2] *Raymond*, p. 347.

ideas about our universe, has been always met by these spirits with the insistence that their knowledge is but little greater than our own. They are still, they say, fallible gropers after truth, for their mental grasp is as inadequate as our own. Hence, Sir Oliver does not know what value to put upon them, or if they be really trustworthy. His doubts, we are certain, would vanish if his mind were illumined by a little light of Christian revelation. For some moments he once caught a glimmer of that light, and saw the path to truth opening up before him; but like all spiritists, wedded to their idol, he stopped short of the goal. In that lightsome moment he wrote:

> "The Christian idea of God certainly has involved, and presumably always will involve, an element of the miraculous—a flooding of human life with influences which lie outside it, a controlling of human destiny by higher and beneficent agencies. By evil agencies too? Yes, the influences are not all on one side; but the Christian faith is, that the good are the stronger. Experience has shown to many a saint, however tormented by evil, that an appeal to the powers of good can result in ultimate victory. Let us not reject experience on the ground of dogmatic assertion and baseless speculation."[3]

In these words Sir Oliver, while accepting two premises which to every Christian are as certain as

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 390.

first principles, fails to draw the logical conclusion that the evil agencies in question are fallen angels. What are those "influences which lie outside of human life"?—What are those "higher [invisible and intellectual] agencies—some beneficent and others evil," that seek to control human life? Man's life on earth, as the Christian knows, is a brief warfare of good against evil, and is followed in a future life eternal with a reward according to its earthly merits. On his side battle the good angels, and in opposition are evil angels known as "demons." These are the outcast angels of heaven, whom Divine Providence utilizes to try man's free will, and, within fixed limitations, to counteract the influence of his good angel. Hence, Sir Oliver says truly, "the influences are not all on one side." Between these good and evil influences man must freely make his choice of standing with the allies or the enemies of God, and so work out his eternal destiny.

But, continues Sir Oliver, "Christian faith is, that the good are the stronger." Yes, in a twofold sense: by their supernatural powers they surpass the fallen angels, and, again, if man choose to stand with them, they make him invincible against all the wiles of those evil angels.

Does not Sir Oliver's reference to God's ordination in regard to human destiny, place him in a compromising situation? He speaks of "beneficent and evil agencies" of a higher order than the human

soul, which, "lying outside of human life," contend, as we know, for the gain or loss of man's soul. But where among these opposing good and bad angels does he find his mediumistic disembodied souls of the dead? By nature the human soul does not belong to either class of those higher [angelic] agencies, who, as we learn from God's teaching in the Old and New Testaments, are positively stated to be immaterial spirits of good and evil. Nowhere is there mention or even a hint that among them are numbered the souls of the dead.

Like all spiritists, blinded by the errors of their cult, Sir Oliver, moreover, not only fails to draw the one conclusion that follows from his given premises, but suddenly somersaults from the divine teaching concerning evil spirits, and from the experience of the saints, to that of his own. "Let us not," he says, "reject experience on the ground of dogmatic assertions and baseless speculations." In other words, he will cling to his own interpretation of his personal experience, even though its interpretation be contrary to dogmatic, that is, to divinely revealed, truths which, we know, are confirmed, not by "baseless speculation," but by all the compelling facts of the saintly lives of millions throughout the Christian centuries.

His appeal from the saints and from the mass of Christian experience to that of his own limited and circumscribed private judgment, recalls the case of

an arch-heretic who, when challenged by certain followers to give some miraculous proof of his claim to a divine commission to establish a new religion, replied in the pride of self-sufficiency: "For me, miracles are not necessary; I feel a firm assurance of my God-given inspiration."

"No, no," replied his followers, "that feeling is wholly subjective and personal. If it be satisfactory to you, it can never be so for us. In the supreme matter of our eternal welfare, we must look for credentials, such as the prophets and apostles gave in proof of their divine commission."

Vain was their search, and vain also shall be ours for the divine credentials of these invisible agencies and their apostles of the new spiritistic cult.

All private experiments have been invariably rejected by scientific researchers, as possessing no evidential value. The Society for Psychical Research has been taught by experience to ignore all physical phenomena that are not done under strict test conditions. It had learned from experimentations that whenever the possibility of hallucination on the part of the sitters and of fraud on the part of the medium were eliminated, the séance was frequently a failure and that the "control" in psychic experiments too often proved to be a lying impersonating spirit, as was shown in the case of Dr. Phinuit.

Concerning the common failure of spiritists to meet the insistent demand for satisfactory proofs,

Mr. Podmore, an eminent authority on spiritistic lore and practises, writes as follows:

> "Again and again the proof has seemed all but complete, and always as the conditions have been perfected so as to close up the last loophole for fraud—always the spirits have refused to do their part. In all these years there is no record of which we can say: 'either the thing happened so, or the investigators have lied.' "[4]

The second obstacle to the proof of the spiritistic claim is due to the duplicity of the invisible agencies. It is indicated by certain circumstances: first, the large amount of fraud discovered on their own part, as well as on that of their mediums; secondly, the extraordinary futility of the pretense to shed light upon problems of the present life; thirdly, their tricks, evasions, and triflings with the most serious inquirers. These evils are admitted to be common, and, in trying to account for them, spiritists have recourse to an imaginary cause. They fancy these invisible agents to belong to a low-caste of still earth-bound spirits who intrude themselves upon the medium, and crowd out nobler spirits.

The absurdity of this dream, with all its difficulties, need not detain us, save to note that it is very likely inspired by the same lying impersonators. It offers a convenient ruse, for, when detected in falsehood, they usually charge it to one of these dis-

[4] *The Naturalization of the Supernatural*, p. 195.

embodied souls of low mentality and morality. Admitting, then, the frequent intrusion of such lying spirits, how can anyone be ever certain of their identity? This uncertainty is heightened by the admission of spiritists, who affirm the impossibility of protecting themselves against the presence of such evil agents. We must, then, as a consequence, conclude that there can be no certainty as to the genuineness of any message nor of the identity of the person communicating.

The third obstacle to the proof of spirit-identity, is to be attributed to the masquerading spirits themselves. Instead of giving really important and evidential facts, they offer others of a trivial or superficial nature. This circumstance has been emphasized by many truth-seeking experimentalists. Mrs. de Morgan, for example, after long experience writes: "The resemblance never seems to be perfect, and to consist of fragments of similarity, or even identity, rather than of a strong general presentation of the whole being."

In his erudite publication[5] Mr. Frank Podmore narrates multiplied instances in which the errors detected in the attempts of these impersonating spirits to establish their identity, were always connected with facts that the inquirer did not know himself, nor was able then and there to correct.

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[5] *Op. cit.*

Sir Oliver Lodge, after listening at many séances to the lengthy communications of "Feda," the supposed "control" of his regular psychic, concluded that they were nothing but the familiar jargon of mediums; for, though delivered with a certain air of superior knowledge and insight, they were so wholly inconsistent in character and devoid of credibility, that he considered them to have originated in the medium's dream-consciousness. But, since these same foolish descriptions of life in the spirit-world are always given forth by "Feda" in all seriousness and with the same credentials as other messages from the dead, we see how little credence can be accorded such spirit-utterances.

Fourthly, the greatest obstacles to any spiritistic proof of identity is the fact established by accumulated evidence, that the information conveyed by the "control" is drawn from living minds, or from other extant and accessible sources. Instances are narrated wherein spirits, when detected in falsehood, have admitted their custom of impersonating the souls of the dead by manipulating the information gathered from the subconscious minds of persons present. We have already seen how the subconscious mind is as an open scroll before the keen and superior intelligence of these masquerading spirits. Though often successful in their efforts, they are not infallible; for they have been known at times to misread or misinterpret the lore before them. In-

stances are found in which incidents proper to divers lives, as recorded in the subconscious mind, were applied to the wrong person. Professor Hyslop reports the case of a relative, in which the spirit, in proof of his identity, specified many facts in his mortal life that were found on examination to apply not to him, but to "another man of the same name, who had lived in the same country, and whose name figured in local history.[6]

We read of the deception which the spirit Grocyn, the "control" of Mr. Stainton Moses, practised upon him. He gave much surprising information concerning Erasmus, which, being new to mortals, was supposed to have been gathered in the spirit-world. But, upon diligent research, Mr. Moses found it in long-forgotten but accessible books.

On another occasion the "control" of Mr. Moses wrote out a number of messages purporting to come from defunct musical composers, which contained the principal events of their lives, as usually found in biographical dictionaries. The singular nature of these messages having roused his suspicion, Mr. Moses, on insistent inquiry, was informed by his "control" that "these were, in fact, messages from the spirits in question; but that they had refreshed the memory of their earthly lives by consulting printed sources of information." Commenting on this incident, the late Mr. F. W. Myers wrote:

[6] Raupert, *Spirit Phenomena*, p. 40.

> "It is obvious that this is to drop the supposed proofs of identity altogether. If any spirit can consult his own printed life, so also presumably can other spirits, and so perhaps can the still incarnate spirit of the automatist himself."

Spiritists are wont to offer as an infallible proof the fact that relatives have recognized the handwriting of the communicating spirit. But this, again, is no conclusive evidence of identity; for, apart from the practises of fraudulent mediums, we may note the words of the late Mr. Myers:

> "A hypnotized subject can frequently imitate any known handwriting far more closely than in his waking state: and that consequently we are bound to credit the subliminal self with a mimetic faculty, which may come out in these messages without any supraliminal guidance whatsoever on the automatist's part."

The fact has been verified by numerous experiments, from which we may safely conclude that what lies within the power of a hypnotized subject may also fall within the power of an entranced medium. The process is identical except that in automatic writing the operator may be the medium's own subconscious mind or perhaps the spirit in "control."

The author of *Dangers of Spiritism* recounts an instance of his own experience in which the invisible impersonator when detected, readily admitted his duplicity, and, in proof of his powers in automatic writing, seized a pencil, and with extreme rapidity

and without a pause wrote out in ten distinctly different handwritings the following sentences:

> "Merely to show you that I can write absolutely as I like, and that there is absolutely no reason when the handwriting changes, the spook should change at the same time, because one spook can write in any way he chooses, and simulate any writing he likes and humbug anybody. If I tell you I am Julius Caesar, my handwriting is manly. If I am Tommy Atkins, I am very ungrammatical. If I am a lady, my handwriting is small. For a boy I write copperplate, for a little girl at an infant school, I write badly, and for a decided man, I write showy."

In presenting in previous pages the case of Oscar Wilde's script, which perfectly resembled, not only his handwriting, but also his peculiar style as seen in his manuscript still preserved in the British Museum, we reserved for the present the question whether that automatic writing by divers mediums was really that of Oscar's disembodied soul. Now, we maintain, in the first place, that the imitation of handwriting offers no conclusive proof of spirit identity; for it is not the dead man's fingers that hold the pencil, nor the hand that acquired by habit a fixed form of writing in mortal life. The whole process of spirit-writing is of necessity a simulation, whatever be the agency that is responsible for it. The same is true in regard to the voice, accent, and phraseology of the dead, which are reproduced

within the hearing of a bereaved father or mother. The voice heard has its origin in the vocal chords of the medium. What is heard, is not the voice of the dead, but a simulation of that voice. If facts are as believers state, they only prove that the denizens of the spirit-world possess a remarkable power of mimicry, and why should not that power extend to reproductions of style and thought, as well as to physical accidents of voice or handwriting.[7]

Secondly, we maintain that no amount of evidence can convince an instructed Christian of the identity of the "spirit-control"; for he is aware that in the spirit-world are myriads of non-human intelligences who know or may obtain sufficient knowledge to impersonate any disembodied soul. If this cannot be proved to the satisfaction of sceptics, they, on the contrary, cannot prove its impossibility.

Thirdly, we maintain that, in the present instance, the Oscar Wilde script is not that of his disembodied soul, but of some masquerading spirit; for, once admit that all we do or say can be known to invisible superior intelligences, it seems to follow that a discarnate soul, as Oscar Wilde's in the present case, cannot give a conclusive proof to its identity. For, every fact that it knows concerning its own previous existence may be equally matter of knowledge to other intelligences of the spirit-world, some good

[7] *Studies*, March, 1924.

and others malicious, and such knowledge may be communicated from one spirit to another for the purpose of deception. Hence, if such superior intelligences, from any motive, wish to impersonate the dead, there seems no limit to the amount of correct information they may give us concerning his past, on the *proviso* that they decide to "get up" the case as a lawyer gets up his brief. Moreover, the evidence of this propensity of spirits to impersonate disembodied souls is overwhelming on the part of the most accredited exponents of Spiritism. Mr. Stainton Moses insistently asserted that there are whole troops of spirits whose one desire appears to be to deceive and impose upon those who are willing to hold intercourse with them.

Spiritists are accustomed to appeal to spirit-photography as an infallible evidence of identity. It is, however, devoid of force save with the uninitiated. Without repeating what has been said in a previous chapter concerning "faked photographs," we maintain that in the presence of so much extant trickery no man's word can be decisive unless supported by indubitable evidence resulting from properly-tested experiments. The very mediums whom Sir Conan Doyle, in his lectures in America, had so highly praised as spirit-photographers, and commended for their well-known integrity as approved by the London society of spiritists, have as already noted, been recently detected by experts who exposed

in the public press the methods of their trickery, by which they had imposed upon Sir Conan and the credulous public.

Spirit-photography, as a truthful reality, is indeed a difficult subject. We may admit its possibility, though ignorant of the method. But this admission presupposes two kinds according to a twofold theory. That of the spiritists has been undermined by numerous exposures of fraud on the part of many accredited mediums, and these exposures have naturally engendered the popular opinion that all such photography is nothing but mechanical trickery. This opinion seems verified if, on the one hand, we consider the notion of the spiritists—that such photos are produced by the action of disembodied souls, who by their supposed invisible presence impress upon the sensitized plate the image of their former material or bodily form; and if, on the other hand, we accept the teaching of the Angelic Doctor, as explained in the following chapters, that the souls of the dead cannot return to earth at pleasure, nor have they any natural power in their new disembodied state to act upon matter, and therefore that spirit-photography, if real and genuine, must be ascribed, not to such souls, but to other invisible agencies of a higher order, that possess natural power over matter.

Rejecting, then, the theory of spiritists, and its supposed worth for establishing spirit identity, we

see much plausibility in the other theory, which seems to have been verified by scientific tests. The few instances we give, will suffice to enable a Christian to discern the true causality of such psychic pictures. The first example is that of the late Mr. Traill Taylor, a famed photographer, and for some years the president of the British Royal Photographic Society. He gave the Society a detailed account of his method, and of the extreme precautions employed in taking these psychic pictures. He calls them thought, or mind, or memory pictures, projected from the subconscious mind of the medium or the sitters. In proof he says that the pictures of angels, though invariably of the imaginary, conventional, winged form, differed somewhat according to the individual minds of the medium or experimenter. Another proof is the circumstance that on some of these photos appeared, with the materialized form of their departed owners, pet dogs, and cats, and parrots, which the medium and sitters believed to have a continued existence in the other world, but which were manifestly images drawn from the memory of those present, and manipulated by invisible agencies. Hence Mr. Taylor concluded that such psychic pictures were worthless as aids to establish spirit identity.[8]

Another eminent authority is Dr. von Schrenck

[8] *New Black Magic*, p. 93. (Concerning Memory Images, vid. Gruender, *Experimental Psychology*, chap. XV.

Nötzing of Munich. His scientific study of Spiritism and its mediums for twenty-five years, and of spirit-photography during four years, gives special weight to his conclusion, that the so-called spirit-images were, without exception, nothing but slightly modified representations of pictures which the mediums had seen in illustrated journals, each being subject to accidental changes according to the memory of the divers sitters. Of this a striking proof was obtained in London after the death of Gladstone and Cardinals Newman and Manning. Many photographs of these celebrities were given, but, on critical examination, each was found to differ considerably, and according to the diversity of likenesses which the various mediums had seen in publications.

Very strong evidence, furthermore, arises from the fact that, at times spirit-photographs have been presented of supposed disembodied souls as they existed in different stages of their mortal life; one as a child, another as a youth, or an adult, each picture corresponding to the memory image of the deceased person as preserved in the individual mind of divers inquirers. Of this conclusive evidence, we are furnished a concrete example by Mr. J. G. Raupert. As a convert from Spiritism, he has in the search for truth made many critical experiments which are narrated in his *Dangers of Spiritism* and in *New Black Magic*.

In one instance there appeared beside him on his

own photograph the image of an old lady still living, whom he knew well only in her youth. But, strange to say, she was pictured, not as she then was yet alive, and old in age, but according to his memory image of her youth, which he had retained in his subconscious mind.

These instances, among many, suffice to show the Christian that any spirit-photograph, even if at all genuine, is nevertheless fraudulent in as far as it is not caused by disembodied souls who, as spiritists believe, hover about their friends on earth, and at times press their materialized forces upon sensitized plates. Such photos are fraudulent if, as supposed, they be the work of masquerading spirits, who draw forth from the memory or subconscious mind of the medium or sitters the treasured images of the dead, and by their powers over things material, which is proper to their superior nature, reproduce them upon prepared plates. This seems clear from the spirit-photographs of the celebrities mentioned above. The pictures, say of Gladstone, were not one and the same, as they surely would be if caused by his materialized disembodied soul invisibly present. The same was true of Manning and of Newman. The picture of each was multiform for the apparent reason that each represented a diverse image which existed diversely in the minds of the various sitters. The error of the impersonating spirit in the case of the spirit-photo of the old lady who was still much alive

is accounted for by the circumstance that the mental images of the dead and the living, as they exist in the subconscious minds of the medium and the sitters are not always clearly distinguished from each other, and the deceiving spirit can but make a shrewd guess. His failure at times affords the critical and experienced investigator the means of detecting his intended deception. Since, then, spirit-photos, if at all genuine, may be the work of masquerading invisible agencies, we see their uselessness for the identification of disembodied souls.

The unconvincing nature of spiritistic proofs for identity is exemplified in an argument of Sir Oliver Lodge. After the death of his son in France, his strong paternal affection impelled him as a spiritist to resort to mediums of well-known ability and to accept as *quasi*-veridical the messages received through "Feda," the supposed "control" of Mrs. Osborne Leonard. He could not, however, as an honest man and scientist, look upon the reality of the communication otherwise than provisional. We quote his words for the sake of comment. He writes:

> "If ever under any circumstances we actually do encounter the interaction of intelligences other than those of living men, we shall sooner or later become aware of the fact, and shall utimately admit it in a more comprehensive scheme of existence. Nevertheless, we are also aware, or

> ought to be, that *no crucial episode can ever be brought forward as deciding such a matter.* . . . Evidence is accumulative. It is on the strength of a mass of experiences that an induction is ultimately made, and *a conclusion provisionally arrived at;* though sometimes it happens that a single exceptionally strong instance or series of instances may clinch it for some individual."[9]

In regard to the first and conditional sentence of the quotation, Christians entertain no doubt. In virtue of Divine Revelation they accept "the intervention of intelligences other than those of living men" in human affairs, and also believe them to be, not the souls of the dead, but other supra-human good or bad spirits. Sir Oliver, in ignoring the existence and actual intervention of these supra-human intelligences, as taught us by Divine Revelation, must, of course, look to merely human evidence, and in his outlook he finds no "crucial episode" decisive in his favor. What, then, becomes of the spiritistic claim? It can, he says, be based only on "cumulative evidences," which leads to a "conclusion provisionally arrived at." If that be so, then, again, the claim has no solid foundation; for nothing but a provisional conclusion flows from provisional premises, and, in consequence, the whole argumentation, being provisional, can lead to no certainty; and thus again we find the spiritists at sea. No accumulation of

[9] *Raymond*, p. 372.

provisional evidence can produce certitude. A chain weak in its links is not strengthened by like additional links.

But, suggests Sir Oliver: "it may happen that a single, exceptionally strong instance may lead to certainty." A single case, however cannot make a universal. In fact, many instances which seemed to one individual "exceptionally strong" appeared to others as inconclusive or non-evidential. A fond mother may take the word of a medium for the fact that she is communicating with her invisible dearly-loved son, but she has no evidence of his presence save the word of the medium, and we have seen what they are. If she feel certain of her son's invisible presence, it is only a feeling, or subjective certainty, for which she has no objective reality. Spiritists themselves admit with regret that sometimes most distressing scenes are witnessed when a bereaved parent, recognizing the presence of some departed loved one, discovers later that it was a trick of the medium, or at best an impersonating spirit. From such common instances grave suspicion is bound to remain even in cases where fraud has not been detected. Many similar examples led, no doubt, a trained mind like Sir Oliver's to entertain nothing more than a provisional conclusion regarding the identity of communicating spirits. Moreover, the so-called spirit-messages may be due to telepathy or to the subconscious mind of the entranced medium, as

Mr. Lodge himself has elsewhere admitted in the case of the babbling "Feda," and so, his "provisional conclusions" should be still more provisional.

Mr. Dale Owen, a noted spiritist, affirms that, after many years of experience, "he has found no proof of identity in the case of any spirit once celebrated either for goodness or for talent who returned in after centuries to enlighten or reform mankind."[10] This fact is of special interest, and prompts the question: Why do masquerading spirits impersonate persons lately deceased, and not those that are dead for many years? The reason seems to us very obvious. In the former case the impersonating spirit can offer plausible marks of identification from the facts which he can read in the subconscious mind of the inquiring friend or relative. But when a person has been dead for many years, and his life-story is unknown to those present and therefore not inscribed in their subconscious minds, the impersonating spirit must resort to some subterfuge: either he replies that the soul of that man, having passed to a higher sphere, is no longer in communication; or if he attempt an impersonation, it is of someone of note whose printed life-record is at his command. This, as shown already, was done in the case of Erasmus and the divers musical composers.

Another circumstance of utmost importance is the

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[10] *Footfalls on the Boundary of the Other World.*

fact that since the formation of the Society for Psychical Research in England and America in 1882, many members who had devoted years to scientific experiments for the purpose of discovering the identity of the invisible agents of spiritism, had promised to return after death, if it were possible, and to give the Society strictly evidential proofs one way or another. But, though many years have passed, not one has returned according to promise. To-day that Society—in the same position it was forty years ago—still maintains that thus far no invisible intellectual agent of Spiritism has offered an indubitable proof to identify itself with a disembodied soul. Many of the members agree in judgment with their eminent vice-president, Sir William Barrett. He writes:

> "It seems not improbable that the bulk, if not the whole of the physical manifestations witnessed in a spiritistic séance, are the product of human-like, but not really human intelligences. It seems to me that the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians points to a race of spiritual creatures, but of a malignant type, when he speaks of beings, not made of flesh and blood, inhabiting the air around us, and able injuriously to affect mankind."[11]

In the same tenor speaks another member of that society, Dr. H. Carrington. No man has written more

[11] *New Black Magic*, p. 200.

in the exposure of spiritistic frauds, and, after many years of experimentation, he is still looking for proofs of spirit-identity. Having condemned those who from inexperience deny the reality of the powers that work unseen, he writes:

> "If they could observe the effects of some of the spiritualistic manifestations, they would no longer scoff at that investigation and be tempted to call all mediums frauds, but would be inclined to admit that there is a true terror of the dark, and that there are '*principalities and powers*' with which we in our ignorance toy without knowing and realizing the frightful consequences which may result from this tampering with the unseen world."[12]

This is true Christian doctrine based on Sacred Scripture, and is subscribed to by other eminent members of that same society. Mr. Dale Owen wrote years ago in words that are perhaps unwittingly still more emphatically Christian:

> "There are more plausible reasons than many imagine, for the opinion entertained by some able men, Protestant as well as Catholic, that the communications in question come from the powers of darkness, and that we are entering on the first steps of a career of demoniac manifestations, the issues of which men cannot conjecture."[13]

Having seen that spiritists have failed to establish

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 201.
[13] *Footfalls on the Boundary of the Other World*, p. 38.

their fundamental claim by proofs that are evidential to the rational non-spiritistic world, our next step is to show, in the following chapter, that, according to the light of Christian teaching, the spirits of Spiritism cannot be the souls of the dead.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SPIRITS OF SPIRITISM ARE NOT THE SOULS OF THE DEAD

IT MAY be opportune to recall briefly two points thus far established: first, that amid the multitude of fraudulent phenomena of Spiritism, there appear to be some that stand out as real and preternatural if the best of human testimony is of any worth; secondly, that the spiritistic assumption that the invisible, intellectual agencies behind such phenomena are the souls of the dead, is not supported by any proof that is satisfactory or convincing to the non-spiritistic world. Our purpose in the present chapter is to prove in opposition, not only that the souls of the dead are not the cause of certain mental and material phenomena, which many rate as genuine, but also that they are incapable of such performances.

Our absolute stand involves certain questions concerning the survival of the soul after death, its new state of existence, its personality, means of knowledge, ability to communicate with men, and its powers in regard to the material phenomena of Spiritism.

These questions are met more or less clearly by the science of psychology. Passing over the many false psychologies which, under the influence of ma-

terialists, ignore the human soul, and deal only with man's material sensitive faculties, we shall follow the psychology which is properly so called because, true to its name, it treats of man's spiritual soul, its nature, faculties and their operations, as known from actual observation and rational deductions. This psychology, begun with Aristotle, has come down to us through the centuries, purified and perfected by Thomas Aquinas and later by eminent philosophers whom we may safely follow in preference to the untried vagaries of transient dreamers.

There is here no question of dogmatism, but rather of philosophic speculation by which master minds, like the Angelic Doctor, under the guidance of reason and the light of infallible truths of Divine Revelation, have given us not a few deductions, some rationally certain, others more or less probable, and others, again, conjectural. These deductions, while having due weight with Christian minds, will have little force with non-Christians who are unacquainted with the well-established science of Christian psychology.

The human soul by its very nature is ordained to a union with a particular organic body to which it gives life and vital functions, and with which, without any admixture of natures, it forms one complete substance in the compound man. Though the soul be the life-giving principle of the body, it retains its own substantial and spiritual nature, which makes

it capable of continued existence after separation from the body.

The soul's survival after death, which spiritists vainly claim to have discovered, follows from its very nature; for being a simple, spiritual substance without composition, it cannot upon leaving the body, be decomposed into parts and thus perish. Its destruction can only be by the same almighty power that created it, and His will may be known from the imperishable nature which He gave it, just as we know a sculptor's design from his finished statue. Immaterial in nature and intrinsically independent of matter in the operation of its spiritual faculties, there is no reason why, when death dissolves man's component parts, the nobler substance should not live on in its own independent spiritual existence and intellectual activities. "*Non omnis moriar,*" said the pagan poet. His was but the voice of nature, and nature never errs. She speaks in that universal craving which at heart all men feel for unending life—a craving engendered by the very nature of the soul itself.

In the present chapter we prescind from that supernatural knowledge which angels and blessed souls acquire by the contemplation of the Divine Essence. Though in that fountain-source of all truth they gain far greater knowledge than was possible in human life, they do not lose that natural knowledge which is common to all in the spirit-world, and with such

knowledge of disembodied souls in their mere natural state, we are here solely concerned.

The first change to note in the disembodied soul, regards its human personality. In earthly life, it was not vested in the soul only, nor in the body only, but in the compound of both in the one subject which constitutes the human person. It is defined by St. Thomas as a complete substance of a rational nature subsisting *per se* and distinct and separate from all other beings. Man expresses his personality by the word Ego, and all his actions, whether spiritual of the soul, as is thinking, or corporeal of the body, as is walking, he attributes to the one and the same Ego which springs from the union of the dual components of his human nature in one substantial existence. When death, therefore, sunders that harmonious union, and the soul enters upon a new mode of existence, all independent of its body, it still retains a sort of personality; for, despite the corruption of its body, the Ego continues to subsist, and to think, and to will.

The human soul is unique in the fact that, though it be able to exist free from matter, it does not come into existence unless received into a body, in union with which it is to acquire the perfection of its nature. Ordained to animate, as its own, some one determinate body and no other, it retains, after separation from it, a natural relation to that same body—a habitude which stamps upon it, as it were, an in-

delible characteristic mark that, persisting in the spirit-world, individuates it from all other souls. Human personality, therefore, may be said to be somewhat maimed after death, when the soul, with the loss of its body, lacks the perfection of its nature. Yet, the same conscious personality of its earth-life in its activity of intellect and will, subsists identically the same, save for the absence of the body.

As we are now considering the disembodied soul, not in the supernatural, but in its natural state, we shall speak only of its natural knowledge which, common to all disembodied souls, is really distinct from that supernatural knowledge proper only to souls that dwell in celestial bliss with God and His holy angels. We may more readily come to know the kinds of natural knowledge that fall within the apprehension of disembodied souls, by comparing the difference in the method of acquiring knowledge in our mortal life and in the spirit-world. In the present life, the soul uses the faculties of its body as windows through which it looks out upon the world. They serve as instruments for acquiring knowledge, and the more or less perfect these internal and external senses are, the greater or less will be the fund of truth acquired. They offer the needed sensible images to the mind, which, by contemplating them, is enabled to learn the nature of objects and their qualities, and thus come to the knowledge of intel-

lectual truth. This necessity of images for our mental functions, arises from the harmonious union of all our faculties, whether material or spiritual, in the one human personality.

When, however, the soul loses with the body its sensitive faculties, the deficiency must be supplied by other images which are altogether immaterial and proportioned to its new and spiritual mode of existence. The new intellectual operations of the soul resemble that of angels who, being by nature wholly independent of matter, exercise their intellectual activities solely by means of spiritual images. Similar images are infused into the soul by the Creator as soon as it enters eternity; for He has placed it in that new state of existence in which, without such images, the soul would necessarily remain in a state of mental lethargy or paralysis—a condition absolutely contrary to the intellectual and spiritual nature in which God has created it. It is by the contemplation of these newly-infused, spiritual images, contained within itself, that the soul comes to know external objects.

From the fact that the soul and its spiritual faculties which are intrinsic to its very nature, remain unchanged in its new state of existence, we may infer that its knowledge, though more universal, will be less distinct in regard to particular things. On earth its images were of singular objects, and therefore more definite; but now they are more universal

in character and somewhat disproportioned to the mind, which in consequence finds it difficult to apprehend each particular thing embraced in those more universal images. In explanation St. Thomas[14] offers an illustration. If general principles be presented to a bright-minded youth, one need not expose in detail all the conclusions that flow therefrom; for he himself with little or no study can grasp the comprehension of these universals. But if the same principles be presented to a pupil of an inferior intellect, he must be shown, one by one, the divers conclusions contained therein. This same difference exists between angels and disembodied souls. The former, possessing superior and intuitive mental powers, can perceive in the general principles the particular deductions to be derived therefrom, while the separated soul, because of its less perfect mind, can envisage in its universal images but a limited number of particular objects. In fact, it has lost that power of knowing particulars which on earth it enjoyed by means of sense perceptions. In mortal life it always rose by abstraction from a very definite particular to the universal, but, in its new life, it begins with universal images, in which it sees less clearly the particular objects embraced in them. In explanation says Lepicier:

> "When in the spirit-world the soul is placed under the immediate influence of the divine light,

[14] *Summa Theologica*, P. I, Q. 89, A. 1.

> the very nature of this light is as it were too strong for us. Our mind was not made for such a glaring brightness, but rather for a more subdued light, and so after death the soul remains somewhat dazzled in the contemplation of those spiritual images without distinctly perceiving the particular objects virtually contained in them. It is as if the outlines of things seen in those pictures or images were less marked and resulted in less clearness and distinctness of the knowledge of the things represented in the soul's vision."[15]

In the second place, souls in the spirit-world know other spiritual beings. If it be objected that they cannot know the angels, since they are more perfect and more simple of nature than the soul itself, St. Thomas replies, that souls departed know the angels by means of divinely-impressed images, which, however, fail to give perfect knowledge of them; for, the nature of the soul is inferior to that of an angel. Nevertheless, from the knowledge which a soul has of itself, we can judge how it knows other spiritual beings. Now, as was said above, as long as the soul is united to the body it understands by turning to phantasms, but these are supplanted in separated souls by infused images of intelligible objects. Even though the new mode of the soul's existence is inferior to that of angels, it is the same as that of other disembodied souls, and of these it, therefore, has a

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[15] Lepicier, O.S.M., *The Unseen World*, p. 121.

perfect knowledge which, in regard to the superior angelic nature, is but imperfect and defective.

Still more pertinent to the theory of spiritists is the question whether a separated soul knows all natural things. St. Thomas,[16] in further rational speculations, maintains that souls in the spirit-world know natural things, not with a certain and proper knowledge, but in a general and confused manner, by means of universal intellectual images which as with the angels are received from the influence of the Divine light. Nevertheless, as this mode of perception is ordinary to the superior angelic nature, it is new and extraordinary to the inferior human soul, which, in consequence, receives through such images, not a perfect, but only a general and confused kind of knowledge; for, that knowledge is necessarily measured according to the superior and inferior mental power of the recipient. Now, angels through such images know all natural things, because all that God produced in the respective natures of such things, has been produced by Him in the angelic intelligence, as says St. Augustine. But the same does not hold in regard to separated souls, and consequently they do not know natural things with a certain and proper knowledge, but in a general and confused manner.

We must not, however, conclude that the souls of the dead do not perceive certain particular things

[16] *Summa Theologica*, P. I, Q. 89.

and persons. True, they do not see them as on earth in the singular, but in infused universal images, in which, for lack of full comprehension, they perceive objects without that distinctness and precision which marked each in mortal life. Nevertheless, we cannot doubt that those images are efficacious means for acquiring knowledge of some particular objects and persons, though these may vary according to the condition of each soul.

To understand this, says the Angelic Doctor, we must consider the twofold way of knowing things, one as in human life by means of phantasms, and in this way singular objects become indirectly known by the intellect; the other, as in the spirit-world, by the infusion of intellectual images. But angels and disembodied souls differ in regard to these images.

Angels good and bad, by reason of their more perfect intellect, perceive through these images not only the specific nature of things, but also the particulars contained therein, while the disembodied soul knows only the particular things or persons to which it has some kind of determinate relation by former knowledge in this life, or by affection, or relationship, or natural aptitude, or by a disposition of Divine Order. All these vary in different individuals; for the separated soul has not the same relation to all, and, therefore, there is not the same reason why it should know all singulars. It will, however, have a natural knowledge of those in par-

ticular with whom it was in relation during human life; for example, the angel guardian and the tempting demon, also relatives and friends, from whom on earth it received an impulse to good or evil, and other souls in whose state or condition it is particularly interested or whose company it shares. It will further be aware from the knowledge of itself, whether it is destined for happiness or punishment, and, through the ministry of its guardian angel, it may acquire, by way of revelation, some knowledge which it could not otherwise attain, and this is specially the case during the time of the soul's purgation. We are here, however, exclusive of the supernatural, speaking only of what the disembodied soul knows naturally, as common to all departed souls in whatever state or condition.

Furthermore, the knowledge gained during mortal life remains to the souls according to the different acquirements. "Let us learn on earth," says St. Jerome, "that kind of knowledge which will remain with us in heaven." Between the two extremes, the one of the child who died before the use of reason, and the other of the man who devoted many years to arduous studies, there naturally intervenes an indefinite series of degrees in knowledge.

To understand the permanency of the soul's human learning, it is necessary to distinguish between that which belongs to the sensitive faculties and that, to the spiritual intellect itself. Now, an intellectual

act remains chiefly and formally in the intellect, which, as says the philosopher, is the abode of mental images, whilst it resides materially and dispositively in the inferior sensitive powers. Hence, knowledge acquired in the present life, which belongs to the sensitive faculties, does not remain in the soul after the loss of those faculties, but only that which belongs to the intellect itself. We, therefore, conclude that the habit of knowledge, in so far as it is in the intellect, remains in the disembodied soul. Further, since intellectual and purely spiritual images remain in the separated soul, it follows that it can, through those intellectual images, understand, apart from the body, what it understood formerly, but in a way wholly different, that is, not by turning to material phantasms, but by a mode suited to its new and spiritual manner of existence. Thus, we may conclude that the act of knowledge here acquired, remains truly, but in a different manner in the separated souls.

From the soul's new mode of acquiring knowledge, it follows that local distance, how great soever, can offer no impediment. For the disembodied soul, says the Angelic Doctor, understands things, not by turning as in life to phantasms of particular objects, but by contemplating intellectual images emanating from the Divine light, and these images, bearing in themselves no relation to space, are indifferent to what is near or distant.[17]

[17] *Ibid.*, P. I, Q. 89, A. 7.

If someone in opposition quote the words of St. Augustine, "The souls of the dead are where they cannot know what is done here," we reply: It is true, they cannot see what is done here, not because they are *there*, but for some other cause to be next considered.

The question whether the souls of the dead know what takes place on earth borrows importance from the false assumption of spiritists. For solution we must again distinguish between natural and supernatural knowledge. The latter, as already noted, is possessed only by angels and blissful souls in heaven, who enjoy the contemplation of the Beatific Vision. We are here, however, solely concerned with the natural knowledge proper to the souls of the dead in whatever state of existence. That they are ignorant of what occurs on earth, follows as a consequence from the previous exposition of the limitations of their knowledge. It was said that the soul departed cannot know particular things or occurrences on earth, save by being in a way determined to them, either by some vestige of previous knowledge, or affection, or by the Divine Order. Now, both by Divine ordination and by reason of their new mode of existence, disembodied souls having passed to another world of incorporeal spiritual beings, which is wholly different from our own, are in a state of separation from the living, and hence are ignorant of what goes on among us. Says St. Augustine:

"The souls of the dead have no concern in the affairs of the living." St. Gregory, as quoted by the Angelic Doctor, assigns the reason: "The dead do not know how the living act, for the life of the spirit is far from the life of the flesh, and as corporeal things differ from incorporeal in genus, so they are distinct in knowledge."

Spiritists, however, argue that the souls of the dead know what takes place on earth, since they manifest an interest in human affairs, as is exemplified in the case of Dives. From the fear that his surviving brothers might meet his own fate, he petitioned Father Abraham to send Lazarus to earth to warn them of their danger.[18]

In the first place, we reply that the fate of Dives should little concern spiritists who, contrary to Divine Revelation, accept the false assertions of impersonating spirits, that there is no sin, nor hell, nor reprobation of the wicked in the Scriptural sense. Secondly, the text does not show that Dives, from the confines of his prison, actually observed the life and actions of his brothers yet on earth. But it does show that from his knowledge of their conduct, which he had acquired while on earth, he rationally concluded that without a moral change for the better, they would surely share in his punishment. Thirdly, according to Christian teaching the dead may care for the living

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[18] *Luke* xvi, 28.

even if ignorant of their condition, just as Christians, though unaware or in doubt of the fate of their departed friends, are, nevertheless, urged to aid them by their prayers. Christian charity, as a supernatural virtue, cannot die at the grave, but immortal it survives and is that golden chain which links together in God's one universal Kingdom all the souls of the just whether in heaven or on earth, or in purgation. Moreover, the affairs of the living can be made known to souls departed by other souls who pass to their domain, or by angels or demons in accordance to the diverse state of such souls.

But the dead, insists the spiritist, sometimes appear to the living and tell them things of personal interest, as when Samuel appeared to Saul.[19]

By thus invoking the Witch of Endor in proof of their position, spiritists clearly assume the same standing as witches and necromancers—a fact which Christians have always maintained—and thus fall under the same Divine condemnation. But in reply: if the dead appear to the living, it is, in the first place, by the special dispensation of God, who at times, as we read in the Lives of the Saints, permitted purgatorial souls to appeal in person to friends on earth for prayerful assistance, and such appearances, says St. Thomas, are to be accounted miraculous.

We recall an instance, the account of which was

[19] 1 *Kings*, xxviii, 11.

obtained at first hand. A young cleric, some days after his death in an Eastern college, appeared in his ordinary religious garb and life-form to the Very Reverend Father Provincial of the Order in a city more than a thousand miles distant, and petitioned him to notify the priests of a certain Community in a far-away State to celebrate the customary Masses for the repose of his soul. The usual death-notice which had been sent by mail had, the ghost affirmed, miscarried, and they were still in ignorance of his demise. The ghost's words were verified in every detail.

In the second place, says the Angelic Doctor, apparitions of the dead may occur, without the knowledge of the departed, through the instrumentality of angels or demons in accordance with the purpose to be obtained. Samuel, who by Divine command had anointed Saul as King of the chosen people, was very appropriately sent from the dead to pronounce God's judgment upon the wicked monarch. The apparition, however, may have been, according to a less probable opinion, some spirit who was divinely commissioned to impersonate the prophet, and to announce to Saul his punishment and death.

Most fatal, then, to the fundamental claim of Spiritism, is the departed soul's incapacity of knowing naturally affairs of human life. When transferred to its new home in the invisible world of spirits, it is not only cut off from earth and all its

material interests, but also deprived of bodily senses, which are the absolutely necessary means of acquiring knowledge of material things of our earth, and, in consequence, it can no longer naturally perceive the changes and transactions occurring in the material world it left behind. This, of course, does not hold with souls supernaturalized in the blissful heaven of God and His angels.

No less fatal to the claim of spiritists is the disembodied soul's natural inability to return at will to visit former friends. Once having entered the realm of spirits, there to live by Divine ordination its own new and immaterial life, there can be no reason why, save by a Divine dispensation given in rare and exceptional cases, it should leave its divinely-fixed abode to return at will to the earth, of which it is no longer a citizen, and which is solely the proper home of mortal humankind.

It is, however, certain that the natural bond of affection which in life united friends and kindred, remains to souls departed. If in life, that bond of love impels many in deep bereavement to the vain and illicit attempt to communicate with their lost ones, we should expect that same bond of love, still existing in the souls of the dead, to produce a like effect, so that they would return to earth, if they could, to console their sorrowing friends. St. Augustine, as quoted by the Angelic Doctor, says that he was not visited or consoled in sadness by his

mother as when she was alive; and he could not think it possible that she was less kind when in a happier state. Elsewhere we have told of the many experimenters who, because supremely interested in the question, had before death promised to return to earth, if possible, but have never done so. Their failure, like that of all others, is another strong argument against the possibility.

The departed soul's natural inability to span the great chasm which Divine Providence has set between the two worlds, visible and invisible, is an unmistakable mark of His Divine wisdom. If we recall the many evils, mental, physical, and moral, consequent upon spiritistic practises, all attested by indubitable authorities, and then reflect how these evils would multiply without limits if the souls of the dead were allowed at will to return to earth and mingle as invisible agents in the affairs of the living. What havoc would be done by countless hordes of outcast souls of all times, who would delight in the continuation of their life of wickedness on earth? Surely, disorders, now limited, would become immeasurable, and our world itself a universal bedlam.

That the spirits of Spiritism are not the souls of the dead, will further appear if we consider the divers kinds of spirits in the unseen world. Its inhabitants are classified by Christian writers, as angels, and demons, and departed souls. These last, under the guidance of Divine Revelation, they further

divide into three classes: first, the souls dwelling in the blissful supernatural heaven of God and his angels; secondly, souls detained in the temporary realm of purgation; and thirdly, unrepentant souls, reprobated and confined for wickedness in an eternal prison. This classification, however, is not exhaustive. It does not include departed souls innumerable that dwell apart in a domain known as the *limbus infantium*. It is the home of unbaptized infants who, because unregenerated into the supernatural state lost by sin in Eden and regained by Christ, remain in the natural state, and thus are incapable of the higher supernatural life of heaven. That they enjoy a degree of natural happiness is the common belief of Catholics, which thought unsupported by any authoritative pronouncement *de fide*, is in harmony with Sacred Scripture and the teaching of St. Thomas, and, moreover, is commonly accepted by Catholic theologians.[20]

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[20] St. Thomas, the master of theologians, affirms that the souls of unbaptized infants live happily in the *limbus infantium* without possessing any knowledge of the supernatural happiness they have missed, because this knowledge, being of itself supernatural, is not, as such, included in what is due the separated soul in its mere natural state. Not having regained by rebirth in Christ by Baptism the right to supernatural happiness, they retain the happiness natural to their nature.

We must suppose that these souls attain maturity of natural powers by some process of natural development so as ultimately to enjoy the full use of the faculties of the soul. To imagine them to live forever in a kind of paradisaic kindergarten seems unworthy of the Almighty Father, who created them in His own image and likeness and gave them an intellectual faculty which is essential to their spiritual nature.

Classed with the souls of infants in this *limbo*, are also the souls of other unbaptized persons of whatever age, who, mentally defective, were never fully responsible for their actions. To these should be added all unbaptized adults who, without fault of their own, had not risen to the height of Baptism of desire, and had not grossly outraged the natural, or unwritten law of conscience.

Now, from which of these four classes are the souls that, as spiritists claim, return to earth at the summons of a medium? Certainly no soul from the Christian heaven of Divine Revelation, where, with the angels, all disembodied spirits enjoy such supreme happiness in perfect union with Divine Justice and His holy will that they cannot sin, nor do aught contrary to His Ordination. His will is their will, and that will was made known to us in the Scriptural inhibition: "Let there not be found among you anyone that consulteth pythonic spirits, or that seeketh the truth from the dead. For the Lord abhorreth these things."[21]

As with the glorified souls in heaven, so too with the blessed souls who dwell in the region of purgation till they be rid of the stains and healed of the wounds they may have brought thither from their combat in mortal life. Predestined of God, confirmed in His love, and conformed to His holy will,

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[21] *Deut.* xviii, 11.

they cannot wish to contravene His absolute prohibition. If now and again on rare occasions some of the souls in purgation appear, as we have seen, to friends on earth, it is always with a special dispensation. Such visitations are, however, rare and exceptional, and never occur at the "sittings" of spiritists. To suppose that blessed souls in the friendship of God, whether in heaven or in the state of purgation, should become the tools or abettors of mediums who seek the gain of lucre or the gratification of the sinful curiosity of mortals, is an impious thought and most repugnant to Christian minds. Such compliance of blessed souls appears still more impossible when we consider that it is contrary to God's command, and that the character of those mediums is at least doubtful or by common repute disreputable. The same reasons apply to the souls in *limbo*, who are all, as the friends of God, under His protection, and subject to His supreme ordination.

Since, then, the supposed spirits of Spiritism can be neither the blissful souls in heaven, nor the blessed souls in the realm of purgation, nor those in *limbo*, must we conclude that they can only be lost or reprobate souls, the associates of demons? The supposition is untenable; for reprobate souls have no egress from their prison. The fact, clearly indicated in divers passages of Holy Writ, is especially emphasized in the case of Dives already mentioned. From his place of punishment he cried out to Abraham in

Limbo, which was the place where the souls of the just were gathered until the Risen Christ should open the gates of heaven. Since Dives could not visit his brothers on earth, he petitioned Abraham to send a messenger to them; but the patriarch refused for the reasons given. "Besides," he said, "*between us and you is fixed a great chaos which no one can pass from hence to you, nor from thence come hither.*" That chaos of immense space, says St. Chrysostom, was of immutable fixity, separating by Divine decree the souls imprisoned in hell from the blessed souls in Limbo, as well as from the brothers of Dives on earth. "A most firm precept of God," says St. Gregory, "prohibits any intermingling of the living and the dead."

In this Scriptural citation, we have an explicit declaration of the impossibility of any communication between the souls of the dead and the living for any purpose however good. The words indicate a parallelism between the brothers of Dives and spiritists of our day. The former did not conform their lives according to the law of Moses and the prophets, nor do spiritists accept the Divine Revelation of Christ and the prophets, as embodied in the Christian religion. Against them, says St. Peter: "We have the more firm prophetical word whereunto you do well to attend as to a light that shineth in the darkness until the day dawn."[22] A Christian is not sur-

[22] 1 *Pet.* i, 10.

prised to see that men who reject the word of God, seek in blindness to acquire the truth by illicit means. It was thus in every age. It is, then, no marvel that, in just punishment, Divine Providence allows them in wilful darkness to fall victims to the wiles of invisible agents—evil spirits, masquerading in the guise of human souls. "So I let them go according to the desires of their heart: they shall walk in their own inventions,[23] and in the multitude of their folly they shall be deceived."[24]

Since, then, souls departed are barred from return to earth, save in rare cases and only by a special dispensation, and always for some supernatural purpose, it is idle to ask whether they can communicate with mortals. The question, however, borrows some importance from the erroneous claim of spiritists, and, in consequence, we shall examine whether, if by some imaginary possibility the souls of the dead could return to earth independently of a Divine dispensation, they could in such visitations naturally convey their thoughts to men. The reply must be negative; for all intercourse between ourselves and these souls is a *psychological impossibility*, owing to obstacles of a nature insurmountable by them and ourselves.

One obstacle is due to the disembodied soul's new mode of existence. In its new state, it is unable to act

[23] *Ps.* lxxx, 13.
[24] *Prov.* v, 23.

upon our material senses and imagination, through which alone we can obtain sensible images or phantasms. These are absolutely necessary for our attainment of knowledge of objects external to ourselves. But it is clear that the disembodied soul, with the loss of its body, also lost its sensitive material faculties, by which alone it could formally come in mental contact with other objects; and for this reason it has no longer any befitting means whereby it can act upon our corporeal organs of sense and imagination in order to produce the necessary images or phantasms by which we can comprehend its invisible presence. Hence, the disembodied soul is unable to communicate with the living who can know things only through sensible images or phantasms. Briefly, by the psychological law of our mental action in mortal life, we can gain knowledge of persons and things only through material images, or phantasms; but the power of producing these or acting upon them, having been lost to souls departed, with the loss of their body, they have, in consequence, no longer the adequate means for communicating with persons in our material world.

Another obstacle to communication with disembodied souls arises from our inability to act upon them as spiritual substances with our material methods of interchanging thoughts. It is obvious, that if, as we have seen, a disembodied soul cannot naturally act upon our material phantasms, much less can we

by any material means, either of speech or of writing, impress our thoughts upon an invisible and spiritual substance which is wholly impervious to material contact or things. Our various methods of communicating thought, have no connection with the new mode of acquiring knowledge, now proper to such souls, and are moreover disproportioned to their spiritual or immaterial method of perception, and in consequence do not fall within their range of cognition.

If, then, the material signs by which in mortal life we manifest our thoughts to fellow-men, are as nonexistent to souls departed, we see why the spiritistic notion that we can converse with them is entirely fictitious. In its flight to the spirit-world, the soul leaves behind with its body all earthly forms of communication with the living. Beyond the "vast chasm," separating them from us, they live in their new sphere of existence as complete strangers, whose newly-acquired mode of exchanging ideas is proper alone to purely spiritual beings of a spirit-world, and hence has nothing in common with our cruder material means of thought-expression; and therefore, since all communication with them is naturally impossible, we must reject Spiritism with its foolhardy and impossible claim.

The fact that fallen angels embrace within their simple and direct knowledge the material objects of this world with their particular phenomena, and that

disembodied souls do not, is owing to the angel's superiority over the human soul, both in nature and in intellect. Unlike man, his higher and more powerful intellect does not need material images for mental activity; but being wholly independent of all material things, both in existence, and nature, and cognoscitive faculty, he is unhampered by them in his acquirement of knowledge concerning material things.

Passing now to another class of phenomena known as physical, which spiritists ascribe to the souls of the dead, we must note that the hypothesis is based upon another unproved assumption, that such souls can act upon material things, and through them produce certain physical phenomena. But we maintain the contrary; for the soul on abandoning its body also loses with it the power which it had over matter by reason of union with that body. St. Thomas Aquinas, Suarez, and other eminent theologians teach that the soul, being determined in its very nature and essential relation to the human body, with which it forms but one and the same substantial personality, has naturally no moving power beyond that particular body which alone it is created to animate; whereas the moving power of an angel naturally extends to every kind of matter, precisely because it is not bound by its essence to any particular body. In fact, even in mortal life the moving energy of the soul is in itself so restricted to the body it vivifies,

as not to extend to other bodies with which it is not substantially united.

In proof, we have the fact that the soul can freely move the members of the body as long as it vivifies them, but as soon as one withers, the soul no longer exercises power over it, even though it still remain united with the body. How much more emphatic is the example of the limb which, when cut off from the soul's own living body, is no longer affected by it, but falls like a corpse to decay? If this be so with a severed part of its own body, with which it was once united, how much more is it true of other material objects which are not in substantial union with it?[25]

Now, it is certain that when at death the soul abandons its body, it does not change its nature, nor become the animating form, or lifegiving principle of other material things, and, in consequence, it acquires no power over them. Nor can we imagine any reason why the soul upon its flight to a spiritual sphere of existence, having once abandoned its corruptible body, with its organic faculties and power over matter, should be given a new power of acting upon material objects which have no existence in that spirit-world. There, until again united with its own body, it associates only with purely spiritual beings in a realm where all things and activities are simply immaterial.

[25] *Summa Theologica*, P. I, Q. 117, A. 4.

If, then, according to the psychological speculations of the Angelic Doctor, disembodied souls cannot of themselves communicate with the living, can they do so by proxy? In the first place, no demon can act as a proxy for a soul in bliss or in purgation. Such souls are the friends of God, confirmed in grace, and, dwelling apart from evil spirits, abhor them and never hold communication with them.

Secondly, were, in any case, a soul in bliss or in purgation to convey with Divine permission a message to friends on earth, it is absolutely certain he would do so through the agency of a good angel, and most likely his own guardian angel; for he is the regularly-appointed minister and intermediary between God and the human soul, which is divinely entrusted to his charge.

Thirdly, if at times, demons at "sittings" are said to have impersonated saintly characters, it was without their consent or cooperation. By such gross frauds those invisible agents seek to win credit with their dupes, in order to impose more readily upon them their antichristian and immoral doctrines, which are always in contradiction with what such saintly persons taught in earthly life.

Fourthly, it is not repugnant to reason, says Aquinas, that a lost soul may convey a message to man through the agency of an evil spirit; for the damned are in the company of the demons, and can communicate their thoughts to them. Nevertheless,

because of the common deception these spirits practise, and the many falsehoods they utter, it is often difficult to decide upon the truthfulness of their impersonations. They never willingly admit the supernatural idea of sin and its punishment, and teach in contradiction that saints and sinners are, all alike, happy in the spirit-world. Besides, were an evil spirit, in any case, to impersonate truly a lost soul, it would be of no benefit to him, since his condition is beyond hope: and the demon, moreover, in keeping with spiritistic practise, would contrive to conceal from men the dreadful reality of that soul's eternal punishment.

It is not, however, impossible that at God's command an evil spirit might, in special cases, assume the phantasmal body of some lost soul in order to add to his confusion, or to serve the cause of justice, or to deter others from a like evil life. But apparitions for such good purposes are never known to occur at séances, which are forbidden by Almighty God.

The apparitions of the dead are never, in accordance with the popular notion of a ghostly form, enwrapped in the cerements of the grave, nor in the suspicious materialized phantoms of séances, which are all, and always, clothed in white muslin or gauzy material, but in the natural bodily form and apparel worn by that person when in earthly life. A well-known illustration is the visitation of the elder

Hamlet's ghost, as graphically pictured by Shakespeare, who was familiar with Christian doctrine. The soul of the murdered king was allowed to return to earth in the cause of public justice. Hence he appears as a patriot, clad in the armor of a warrior-king, as his son had often seen him. He comes to vindicate the violated rights of the State, of his lawful successor, and of his family; and, in furtherance of these, he unmasks a foul criminal, whose secret, monstrous, triple crime against the divine and the natural law had cried aloud to Heaven for vengeance. As a purgatorial ghost he emphatically cautions his son against, "tainting his soul" by sin in the punishment of his uncle.

After the lengthy refutation of the spiritistic assumption that the invisible agencies at work in their phenomena are the souls of the dead, it is well to close with a summary of what has been thus far established: first, that the fundamental claim of Spiritism is founded on nothing more than the unsubstantiated word of masquerading lying spirits; second, that no separated soul can at will pass the "great chaos" which, fixed by Divine decree, separates the spirit-world from our earth; third, that when, with God's dispensation, certain souls have on rare occasions visited earth, it was always for some purpose supernaturally good, and in a visible form, natural as in life, bearing messages which were never in contradiction to Divine Revelation; fourth, that

of the four classes of the souls of the dead, none can, contrary to the Divine inhibition, be at the beck of mediums, certainly not the blissful souls in heaven, nor those in *limbo*, nor those in the region of temporary purgation, nor those banished to the realm of Satan in eternal reprobation; fifth, that souls departed, being naturally ignorant of affairs and transactions of earth, and having no adequate means of communicating with us, nor we with them, cannot cause the psychic phenomena of Spiritism; sixth, that no longer possessing any power over material things —a power they lost on abandoning the body—the souls of the dead cannot act upon matter, nor perform any of the physical phenomena claimed by spiritists. These effects, therefore, both psychical and physical, must, if real or preternatural, be the work of spirits other than human souls, and the only other spirits are good and bad angels. But the Holy Angels cannot, as shown, lend themselves to the unbecoming and debasing practises of Spiritism, which are contrary to God's holy will, and, therefore, there remain but the fallen angels, or evil spirits, and these will be shown in the following chapter to be the invisible agents of Spiritism.

CHAPTER XV

THE SPIRITS OF SPIRITISM ARE SPIRITS OF EVIL

FROM the conclusion thus far established, that the invisible agencies of Spiritism cannot be the angels of heaven, nor souls departed of any grade or condition, it logically follows that the cause of spiritistic phenomena which are said to reach the preternatural, can be none other than the sole remaining class of spirits—spirits of the nether world or fallen angels commonly known as "demons." In the exposition of this truth, it is necessary to dwell upon the existence of these evil spirits, their nature, classification, knowledge, powers, and their motives for the invasion of the land of the living, and intermeddling in the affairs of human life.

For the existence of purely spiritual substances or beings wholly independent of matter in their nature and activities, we manifestly have not the same evidence as for other things of our visible creation. If the contemplation of the universe logically leads rational minds to the knowledge of the great First Cause, it does not offer the same evidence for the actual existence of other beings that are purely spiritual, and invisible, and distinct from God and very different from human souls. The principle that we may trace effects to their causes, seems futile

when applied to immaterial agents whose substantial nature, being purely spiritual, is intangible and invisible. In fact, the real existence of an invisible world peopled by purely spiritual beings, would, if not disclosed by Divine Revelation, remain forever a mystery to mankind.

But where nature fails us, a supernatural religion steps in to supply the desired evidence. It is found in Holy Writ, in tradition, in the teaching of the Fathers, in the decrees of General Councils, and in the voice of the Universal Church. It is summarized in the definition of the Fourth Council of Lateran: "God by His almighty power created together in the beginning of time both creatures, the spiritual and the corporeal, namely the angelic and the earthly, and afterward the human, as it were, a common creature composed of spirit and body."

An angelic being cannot be defined with exactitude, because all our concepts originate in material, sensible images, and from them we can form but a proximate idea of invisible and immaterial substances. They may, however, be described as intelligent beings, transcending the entire order of our visible universe, and of a nature so subtle and independent of all matter, even the most ethereal, as to be imperceptible to the keenest sight. They are properly called "pure spirits," for in existence, nature, and activities they are free from any essential relation to matter however imponderable.

Multitudes of fallen spirits bearing their punishment with them, says the Angelic Doctor, wander on earth by Divine dispensation for the fulfilment of God's design, of which they remain ignorant. This is in accordance with the Creator's general scheme of government, which purposes that each part of creation, visible and invisible, contribute to the well-being of other parts, and all to the one harmonious universal good. As men derive profit from the ministry of good angels, so with God's aid they can turn to ultimate good the wily efforts of evil spirits. If we consider the acute penetration of angelic minds, their ceaseless spiritual activities, their wide range of vision and of knowledge, their power over organic and inorganic matter, their vast influence exercised in a wondrous manner by the excitation of a man's sensitive faculties and imagination, we shall conclude that they try man in many and diverse ways. But however intense be their malice and activity, their power is always limited by an all-wise Providence, according to whose unfathomable design their efforts tend to rouse men to a spiritual or moral conflict, and in that conflict men prove their fidelity to God, and by that fidelity, they win a victory over evil, and by that victory merit an immortal crown of supreme happiness and glory.

To solve the elusive problem of spiritistic phenomena that are said to be really preternatural, is the same as to expose the fact that the invisible

agents at work are none other than evil spirits. Any attempt at solution calls, first of all, for some exposition of the knowledge and power of these fallen angels. From the outset, we admit the difficulty of the matter; for the angelic nature with its activities, lying wholly beyond our life of experience, must make any explanation very inadequate.

Nevertheless, from the study of the human soul, which, in its invisible spiritual nature and faculties, bears a close relationship to angelic beings, we may gain some light upon our present theme. We must, however, exclude all idiosyncratic views of presumptuous dogmatists, whose opinions, being merely personal and usually subjective, are well-exemplified in the case of Mr. Wells, the novelist, who writes history with very much imaginary, but very little objective reality. A man lost in the gloom of a forest naturally seeks an exit where light appears. For light we must look to experts, to eminent philosophers and theologians whose mental speculations, based on the necessary laws of truth and logical inferences, have always possessed a great weight with thinking men. To reject this store of knowledge, accumulated by the persevering labors of a long line of scientists, is to nurture ignorance on a subject so abstruse and subtle as the angelic nature.[1]

We shall therefore follow in the present, as in the

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[1] St. Thomas, *Summa Theologia,* Prima Pars, De Angelis.

preceding chapter, the conclusions of these great luminaries. The knowledge of angels is both natural and supernatural. The latter the fallen spirits lost by sin, and now possess only the former as an essential element of their substantial existence. Since celestial beings have naught to do with spiritistic phenomena, we need dwell solely on the natural knowledge common to all fallen angels or demons. The difficulty of obtaining a proper estimate of the angelic mind, is due to our imperfect norm, for we can measure it only by comparing it with our own inferior intellect. The human mind, however, is confined within the narrow compass of our material vision, while the angelic is unlimited by matter, and enjoys a vast range extending to all things of the visible and invisible creation. To say that in mental capacity angels surpass us in a far higher degree than the wisest philosopher does a child, is, indeed, to use a very weak comparison.

An angel's mode of acquiring knowledge must differ widely from our own. If man can in one vision take in a whole landscape, an angel can do more—can comprehend at a glance the entire field of any science with its first principles and deductions. As angels are devoid of bodily faculties, and, besides, reflect the image of God more perfectly in their nature, it follows that their manner of gaining knowledge also approximates more closely the Divine, and accordingly they receive a greater

abundance of intellectual light than man. This light consists in those images or mental pictures of external objects which, in conformity with the need of their nature, the Creator impressed upon them from the first moment of their existence. Hence the angelic nature is a living mirror in which he may contemplate external things. As a consequence, his intellectual operation involves no real study, nor effort, nor fatigue, as with man, but consists in a placid gazing on those images, or mental pictures within his mind, which are in proportion to the greater or less intellectual perfection of each angel. A man, how eminent soever in a given science, cannot hope to exhaust his subject, but a like limitation does not affect the infused knowledge of a spiritual substance. For, an angel's mental images contain, not only first principles, but also all that pertain thereto, and so also in regard to all other objects of the visible and invisible creation. If, furthermore, we reflect that the angelic mind is not, like ours, subject to the limitations of time and space, and in consequence is not, in the acquirement of knowledge, impeded by any distance however great, we shall readily see how those bright intelligences vastly surpass mortal minds.

Though vast be the mental comprehension of those fallen angels because of these infused images, it does not include future events which depend on free causes, nor the secret thoughts of the human heart. The fact is of importance in determining the connection

between spiritistic phenomena and their invisible agencies. It is certain that any knowledge of future contingent effects, as also the hidden thoughts of man, can be known by angels only by a special revelation on the part of God, or of his free rational creatures, on whom either of these kinds of knowledge respectively depends. The mind of the Creator in regard to His future actions is unknown to creatures, and the future actions of man's mind and free will, as well as his secret thoughts, are open to God alone. Hence, answers in such things are but cunning guesses, in which we may discern the presence of fallen spirits who, in a perverted love of falsehood, assert as true, events of which they have no accurate knowledge. Their subtlety of intellect, however, enables them so to piece together things they really do know, and, from their insight into nature, so to form conjectures as to deceive many into believing that they really have a knowledge of future contingent events.

Future effects which depend on physical causes, fallen spirits can readily perceive; for, in nature with its great store of knowledge which lies before them as an open book, they can read the properties of things, their mutual relations, and the workings of the laws of nature. As they can know,[2] moreover, the physical constitution of each mortal, they can with probable accuracy foretell his future state of

[2] *Ibid.*, Q. 57, A. 3.

health, and closely conjecture his term of life.

As to the question whether demons know our thoughts, we must premise, that for one man to perceive another's mind, his mere will to lay bare his thoughts is not sufficient. He must, furthermore, overcome the impediment arising from the bodily envelopment of the soul, and this he can do by signs, or speech, or writing. But with evil spirits, the body is no obstacle, and hence for them to perceive our thoughts, it suffices for us to will to manifest them, and for them to give attention.[3] Though by their natural powers they cannot see whether a man be in the state of grace or of mortal sin, they can, nevertheless, easily conjecture the fact from inward or outward signs.

Man's mind and heart, as already noted, remain a stronghold impregnable to a demon's shrewdness unless they be exposed in some implicit or explicit manner.[4] From such expositions, angelic knowledge becomes far-reaching, extending to distant things, to hidden facts, to secret thoughts, desires and intentions; and these they can communicate to men by virtue of their power over nature, and in particular over the human brain, whose modifications, corresponding to the objects in our mind, can be known to them—from all which, it is clear how they may through fitting instruments, as are entranced psychics, make surprising revelations.

[3] *Ibid.*, P. I, 107, A. 1. [4] *Ibid.*, P. I, 57, A. 4.

To ascribe to fallen angels the various phenomena of Spiritism, requires the examination of their natural powers over the elements of matter and over man himself. The general principle that the inferior is subject to the superior is well-exemplified in man, whose lower material nature is governed by his immaterial and spiritual soul. If this subordination of matter to spirit is natural to man and to all living things, it seems also natural that our material world should be governed by spiritual beings of a higher order; and if this be natural, it must be ascribed to the Author of nature, who has willed that certain powers be given to ministering spirits for the greater manifestation of His glory, for which they, as well as all other things, exist. Such an age-long belief is supported by philosophical and theological principles which, based upon Holy Writ, are embodied in the teachings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Universal Church. St. Augustine, for instance, affirms that the distinct species in every realm of nature are under angelic domination. In St. John's revelations we read of the angel who has power over fire, and of another who presides over water.[5]

This natural power over matter, possessed by angels, as well as demons who, as we have said, have not by sin lost any of the forces proper to their natural existence, does not extend to the changing of

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[5] *Ibid.*, Q. 110.

the substance of one material object into another; and, if at times, as in the case of the serpents of Pharaoh's magicians, they appear to produce living things, as by instantaneous creation, it merely results from their power of transferring something with wondrous celerity from afar, or of quickly bringing to maturity the germs of things intelligently chosen. There are Scriptural facts in illustration of angelic power to transfer a body from one place to another with a rapidity surpassing anything known in nature. Suffice a mere allusion to the well-known cases of Ismael, Elias, and the Apostle Philip. This ability of moving bodies from place to place, manifests their power of contact with the material world, and exhibits it as a proper sphere of their local action.

In such movements, says the Angelic Doctor, an angel, as a spiritual, or immaterial substance, is not, like man, hampered by space nor circumscribed by matter, but is localized only by his activity in a particular object. His place he can change instantaneously by a transfer of his action from one thing to another, and the place or object wherein he exercises that activity becomes his domain, which he occupies to the exclusion of other spirits. In this absolute spiritistic occupation of material objects may be found the explanation of that marvelous control of things of whatsoever nature, which has so long perplexed and baffled scientific investigators of spiritistic phenomena; for, the proper object of the

studies of these men of science, is the visible, and not the invisible, creation.

This power of local transference of things, furthermore, enables fallen spirits to cause a great number of changes. If in nature's laboratory, the bringing together of simple elements produces, by combination and interaction, certain effects, it need not seem surprising that spirits, whose power extends over a vast range, and whose knowledge of the physical and chemical laws of nature far transcends that of the greatest scientist, should be able to cause many marvelous effects within or without a spiritistic circle.

Again, a fallen angel, by reason of his superior natural powers, can by the use of the proper means produce the most wonderful optical effects, either by causing unknown brilliant substances to shed floods of light, or by exhibiting shadowy or illusive forms resembling phantasmal representations. He can without an instrument produce the sweetest music, cause strange raps and explosions, and make a pencil by itself write connected sentences with an intelligent meaning, and often in the handwriting of some soul departed. Needless to repeat here other phenomena which have been exposed in a previous chapter, and which are within the power of fallen angels. But we may add that they can move man's intellect, stir his senses and imagination, make him insensible to bodily impressions, produce various modifications of

his body, and to some extent suspend the functions of life, stopping the breath or accelerating the circulation of the blood, as is sometimes seen in mediums, and more often in possessed persons.

An interesting and very pertinent matter are the supposed materializations which are said to have occurred at certain sittings of some famous mediums. Fortunately, Scriptural examples of angels assuming human bodies greatly aid in illuminating a difficult subject. These facts offer indubitable proofs that spirits can fashion a human form in which they exhibit the ordinary functions of our organic life. But such a body is not really what it seems, nor becomes a part of the angelic nature. It is a mere visible but non-vital form, an instrument that enables an angel or a demon to manifest to our senses his naturally invisible activities, which otherwise would remain unnoticed. The fact is readily explainable if we recall the power, common to good and to bad angels, of bringing together from other places near or far material elements, of which a great abundance and variety exist in nature, and fashioning from them by combination and condensation an apparent human body.

The supposed materializations by fallen angels have never reached the reality and dignity of those recorded of good angels in Sacred Scripture. What phenomena more wondrous than the glorious equestrian spirit, who was accompanied on either side by

two other beauteous angels that visibly scourged the sacrilegious Heliodorus in presence of a multitude in the Holy Temple at Jerusalem! What more realistic than the angel who awoke St. Peter in the dungeon by a stroke on the side, raised him up, and, shattering by his touch the chains on his limbs, led him forth through wakeful guards to liberty! But no instance, owing to the many diversified activities, with their realistic circumstances, is more illustrative than the lengthy sojourn of the Archangel Raphael with young Tobias. So true to nature were his appearance and all his varied actions, usual to human life, that the pious family, without the least misgiving, took him to be what he seemed, a real living man of flesh and blood. Only at his departure, did they learn the truth, when, to their surprise unto stupefaction, the Archangel, enveloped in supernal splendor, disclosed his real personality.

Spiritists of today anxiously ascribe their supposed materializations to the manipulation of a certain delicate, vital, or psychic substance known as ectoplasm. To the touch, it is said to be viscous, cold and slimy, and, withdrawn only for some moments from the body of the psychic, it is again restored thereto. Its reality as a factor in materialization is, in the face of much scepticism, vouched for by several eminent scientific experimenters, while, again, many in opposition deny its existence. The difficulty of verifying the fact is due to the positive prohibi-

tion, forbidding anyone to interfere by touch or otherwise with the supposed psychic matter, on the plea that such contact would endanger the life of the entranced medium. But, strange to say, whenever that inhibition was ignored by sceptics, artificial contrivances were, as we have already seen, exposed on the part of the fraudulent medium.

Reserving the reality of such ectoplasm for a later discussion in the Appendix, we simply note, for the present, that, granting its supposed reality, it may be explained by recalling the angelic power over material things, as shown in previous pages. In presence of that power, there seems nothing against the notion of a demon's ability to abstract that nerve-substance from the medium's body, and of constructing therewith those lifelike forms which exhibit the characteristics of a real human body; for the sensitive, in the state of trance, by willingly submitting to the practise, falls under the complete sway of those spirits. The evident suffering of the psychic during and after the process, seems to indicate the abnormal action of some invisible preternatural agency.

Even were we to accept as true the alleged fact that the psychic supplies the needed substance for the spirit in control, the phenomena can be explained on other grounds. It is possible for angels good or bad, as shown above, to utilize divers elements that abound in nature, and which they are well able to borrow from animate or inanimate objects. Surely,

the Archangel Raphael, who, in his stay with young Tobias for many weeks, exercised all the functions proper to human life, did not employ the supposed ectoplasm, but must have by his natural powers, common to good and bad spirits, taken for the formation of that body and its activities, the needed elements from nature.[6]

We have seen, from Sacred Scripture, that angels have a natural power to assume an apparently human body, and to operate in its guise. Fallen angels have not lost this natural power, and to them must be attributed spiritistic materializations, if such there be. If the apparition be genuine, it is caused by a masquerading evil spirit who, in accordance with his knowledge of the disembodied soul impersonated, fashions in counterfeit, his human form and features. This knowledge he may obtain, as we have seen, from the memory pictures or phantasmal images which are stored away in the subconscious mind of the medium or sitters present. Such apparitions, if real, are not actual human bodies, but only phantasmal forms which serve as visible instruments to externalize the action of invisible agents, and to them, and not to the disembodied soul impersonated, must be attributed the mechanical and non-vital actions which seem to emanate from the phantasmal human body.

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[6] Lepicier, O.S.M., *The Unseen World*, p. 215.

This power over material elements, which, by reason of their spiritual nature, is common to good and bad angels, extends also in many cases to men, as evidenced in possessed persons, as well as oftentimes in entranced mediums. Man's internal and external organs of sense perception, are by nature subject to the peculiar motion of his vital and subtle nervous system, and this a fallen angel, because of his perfect knowledge of the operation, can so cause to work together as to produce artificial phantasms similar to those effected naturally. Further, he can stimulate the imagination to such a fervid activity as to convince a man that he has actually been transferred to a distant place, that he has conversed with persons there, and all so strikingly realistic as to enable him to describe with exactness the scenery of the place, the characteristics of the people, and the conversation entered into with divers parties. The fact has been verified many times, especially in mediums and witches. The latter, according to judicial records, have often testified to their sudden transportation through the atmosphere to a far-distant rendezvous, where they met in assembly many fellow-members of the Black Art. This fact they maintained under torture and even under oath, to their very death on the scaffold.

The influence of angels good or bad over man's senses and imagination is further but indirectly extended to his intellect. Since man can apprehend

truth only through the medium of sensible images, it follows that an angel, if he wishes him to understand a thing, must present it under some sensible form, and this he can do both in the sphere of our external senses and of our imagination, either by bringing into action the latent energies of our nervous system, which by nature is subservient to his operations, or by rousing the sensitive memory to recall former images.

In thus briefly summarizing the teaching of eminent philosophers and theologians concerning the nature and extent of angelic powers over material elements and over man's sensitive and intellectual faculties, we have noted the exceedingly wide range of their possible activities, and how these so transcend the known energies of all physical agencies of our visible world as to be but imperfectly apprehended by the human mind, which by its natural limitations is very inferior to the mental ability of these wonderful spirits. From the above considerations, we see the possible relation of fallen angels to spiritistic phenomena either of the physical or of the mental order. Of the many mentioned in preceding chapters, there is not one that would be impossible to these canny fallen spirits. But possibility is one thing, and actuality another. The latter, we maintain, is rare. But if at any time these invisible agents should be allowed under certain conditions or in exceptional cases to manifest their powers in spiritistic phe-

nomena, the fact, because of its rarity, should not be admitted without convincing evidence.

Besides the evidences thus far adduced, there are others of an extrinsic nature, which indicate that the invisible agencies of Spiritism are spirits of evil. "By their fruits you shall know them," is the absolutely safe guiding-principle given us by the "Light of the World," and in its application seems to lie the solution of the spiritistic problem.

In its very methods of manifestations and their attendant circumstances, Spiritism cannot escape suspicion. Its works, vain, frivolous, and of no benefit to mankind, are born of sinful curiosity on the part of the sitters, and are mostly done on the part of mediums for the sake of lucre. They occur under abnormal conditions of man's faculties, and are often accompanied by distortions, quaking, and a general disturbance of his physical and mental nature—all denoting the active presence of some invisible evil agent who is one of the fallen spirits; for, confirmed in evil, they delight in disturbances, in discord, in falsehood, and in the display of their powers without goodness, and of their energies without love. On the contrary, good angels in their visitations have without exception directed their manifestations to man's good, bringing peace, joy, and happiness to the visited.

Lying is another evil characteristic of these invisible agents, as is admitted by the devotees of the

cult itself. Now, lying surely cannot be predicated of good angels who, confirmed in sinlessness, enjoy God's love and glory; but it is positively a marked and divinely-affirmed characteristic of the "Father of Lies" and his fallen myrmidons, who hate the truth and speak it solely on occasions when it serves their purpose better than falsehood. If at first they have suggested good and pious thoughts to virtuous persons, it was, as discovered later, only as a means to cloak their design of leading them further on to evil.

Another evil trait is manifest hypocrisy. When impersonating historic celebrities and even saints, these spirits have often spoken in contradiction to the doctrines which those characters were accustomed to teach in life. More than once their hypocrisy was unmasked by the horror they manifested at the presence of consecrated objects, and by their obedience to adjurations made in the Holy Name of God. We may recall the case of M. Chevalier, when the trembling table hurriedly withdrew to a distant corner of the room, and of the French garrison, when a crucifix placed upon the table by an officer silenced the rappings and all further proceedings. A remarkable instance is narrated by C. S. Pailloux.[7] At an experimental séance held in the episcopal palace in the presence of the Bishop of Rennes, in France, the table having been conjured in the Name

[7] *Le Magnetisme, le Spiritisme et la possession*, p. 435.

of Almighty God, and commanded to break down before the Bishop, at once made a jump, and falling aslant was broken at his feet.

That these fallen spirits are allowed to tempt men with the evil intent of estranging them from God, is in accordance with the principle of Christian philosophy, as well as of supernatural faith. The Ruler of the Universe never permits any moral evil which, by His wisdom infinite and His power almighty, He does not turn to the good of man's eternal interests. This Christian principle was attested by Shakespeare's Catholic philosopher in the words: "There's a Divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will."

An all-ruling Providence, as was shown in previous pages, utilizes the nefarious work of these fallen spirits to promote His own ulterior purpose of sifting men's souls in a moral combat, which these spirits instigate and urge by means of temptation. In that combat man must take his stand for virtue or for vice, must align himself with angels or with demons, must adhere to Christ the Lord and Saviour or to Antichrist, the arch-enemy of mankind. To will solely, will not suffice.[8] Action is demanded by Divine decree, "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."[9] Heaven is

[8] Not every one that saith to me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. (*Matt.* vii, 21.)

[9] *Matt.* xi, 12.

not the home of slaves, but of free spirits, and by Divine ordination is to be won by freemen who merit it by the rational use of their free will. When the angelic hosts were subjected to the trial of their liberty of action in the choice of good or evil, many fell, preferring themselves to God; so, many men in probation on earth, voluntarily fail in allegiance to Heaven's King.

But, in this moral combat man, on the one hand, struggles not alone; with him, if he will, is God's unfailing aid, all invisible to the enemy, and on the other, the power of these fallen spirits is greatly circumscribed and limited especially in regard to true Christians, as exemplified at sittings when their sole presence sufficed to baffle the efforts of the spirits and to disrupt the circle. The same protection is, however, wanting to all who deliberately enter a spiritistic gathering. By that very act they flout God's solemn prohibition, and in their sinful state of disobedience, not only forfeit His protecting hand, but also expose themselves to the evil influence and cunning frauds of these lying masquerading spirits. For a like practise King Ochozias was sentenced to death by an angel of the Lord.

Christians know that Satan and his fallen hordes, "bound for a thousand years"—an indefinite period —in regard to true Christians have lost the power they once exercised in the pagan world. "Bound like chained dogs," they can harm only those who will-

ingly approach them. Hence, if, obedient to God's holy will, the Christian confide in His almighty power, "the dogs of Satan," though they rage in malice, cannot break their chains nor bite unless the faithless Christian, untrue to his conscious duty, willingly approaches and thrusts himself within the reach of these malignant hounds of the nether regions.

But the most manifest of the evil fruits of Spiritism are the contradictory and antichristian doctrines which its invisible agencies inculcate concerning man's present and future life, and these shall form the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER XVI

"THE NEW REVELATION"

CERTAIN writers who wish to consider Spiritism as all fraudulent, often fail to distinguish between its physical and its psychical phenomena. Even though the former were all due to trickery, nevertheless there remains its automatic or spirit-writing by which it inculcates a new religion and a creed that is absolutely in contradiction to divinely-revealed Christianity. This alone is sufficient reason to bring Spiritism under the ban of the Christian Church.

Spiritism as a religion may be safely tested by its teachings. If its loudly-boasted claims, of which we have already shown the hollowness, catch the ignorant or the unwary, to every Christian they can be but sounding brass or tinkling cymbals. A Christian is armed against the errors of Spiritism, for his is the infallible criterion given by St. John to the converts of his day against necromancers or ancient spiritists. "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God." This text is often quoted by the spiritists themselves in confirmation of their new creed. But, wondrous to say, either from ignorance or from sophistry, they stop short at those words; whereas, if they read the full text, they would

find therein the infallible evidence by which St. John utterly condemns their "New Revelation." In proof we quote the complete text:

> "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. By this is the spirit of God known. Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God: and every spirit that dissolveth Jesus, is not of God: and this is Antichrist, of whom you have heard that he cometh, and he is now already in the world."[1]

Tried by this test of the Evangelist, Spiritism surely stands condemned; for it absolutely denies that Christ is the Son of God. Its system of religion is, in fact, formed from doctrines which are not only often contradictory, but also subversive of the principle tenets of Christian revelation.

The leading spiritists in England and America exhibited from the start a marked drift toward Swedenborg's heterodox opinions. The majority seemed affected solely by the physical phenomena and the supposed communications with the dead, and, in consequence, there was not, for many years among English-speaking peoples, any generally-accepted system of spirit-teaching. It was otherwise in France, where, in 1857, Allan Kardec first attempted to reduce to some sort of unity, the chaotic mass of

[1] 1 *John* v.

spiritistic "revelations." Others soon followed in Germany, but all found the task far from light; for, from the birth of the new Spiritism, in 1849, till the present day, the spiritists in various countries were accustomed to teach doctrines of striking contradictions, and only by the elimination or modification of these, were the more highly-educated able to formulate even an inconsistent system of religious beliefs; and this system spiritists term the "New Revelation."

The fallacy of the spiritists, that their new religion is solidly founded upon scientifically demonstrated facts, was exposed in previous pages. It was shown that many scientists, while admitting the facts, did not pronounce their invisible causes, whether souls departed or goblins damned. If Sir Oliver Lodge accepts the spiritistic hypothesis, it is conditionally, as was exposed, and from personal motives, and not because of any scientific demonstration. Sir Oliver's true position is of importance, since Sir Conan Doyle in his propaganda never tires of forcing upon his audience the famous physicist as a scientific authority. Against Sir Conan is the very pertinent declaration of Professor Jastrow, of the University of Wisconsin:

> "As a fact, the operations of Sir Oliver's mind in the physical laboratory move in one manner, and his reactions to the communications of mediums behave in altogether a different fashion. For the interests of social sanity and in the name of sound science, it is important to make it plain

that men of science regard the position of Sir Oliver Lodge as a personal matter without scientific standing. For Sir Oliver, as a British scientist, we have the most cordial welcome and respect, but for his advocacy of survival on evidence that is steeped in fraud and is full of childish irrelevance, we cannot have any other feeling than of duty to counteract its influence."

A deadly argument against the verity of the "New Revelation" lies in the fact that it does not rise above the veracity of mediums. Now, since a great majority of these are admittedly fraudulent, what are we to think of the others? How pick out the few from the mass of the false mediums? And of these, how determine their honesty and veracity? In any case, we have nothing more than their word. How, then, can the unsophisticated devotee distinguish the true medium from the vast crew of pretenders? Such distinction is of vital importance; for the entire "New Revelation" comes to us through mediums. What, then, does Sir Oliver Lodge say? After many years of experiment, he testifies: "it is difficult to find a dependable medium; some consciously distort messages, and others may do so unconsciously." Such, he thinks, was the case with his favorite medium, Mrs. Leonard, whose "control" claimed to be the departed soul of Feda, a young Indian maiden. Again, affirms Sir Oliver:

"It ought to be clear that they [the messages]

> are not to be taken as oracular utterances, or as anything vastly superior to the capabilities of the medium through whom they come. In all cases they must surely be more or less sophisticated by the channel and by the more or less strained method of communication, and must share some of its limitations and imperfections."[2]

Here we have the calmly-written judgment of the recognized leader of modern Spiritism. It is based on his own experience. What must we, then, think of the "New Revelation," received through such mediums and their invisible agents, whose real personality, as previously demonstrated, cannot be satisfactorily verified? At best, shall we take their sole word? Let credulous spiritists foolishly do so. But a Christian insists on retaining his common sense in a matter of such supreme importance as the acceptance of a new and antichristian religion which is promulgated by invisible agents of more than suspicious personality and veracity. His position is, furthermore, approved by numerous noted spiritists, who have confessed that many "controls" are lying spirits. Says, for example, Sir William Barrett: "Good as well as mischievous agencies doubtlessly exist in the unseen world. There are as great fools in the spirit-world as there ever were in this."[3] Many good illustrations of the fact are furnished in Sir

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[2] *Raymond*, p. 251.

[3] *Threshold of the Unseen*, p. 250.

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Oliver's *Raymond.* In one instance, "Feda" spoke through the medium as follows:

> "A chap came over here the other day and would have a cigar. There are many laboratories over here and they manufacture all sorts of things in them. Not like you do out of solid matter, but of essences and ethers. Don't think I'm stretching it when I tell you that they can manufacture strong drink and whisky sodas."

Such nonsensical trifling concerning affairs so momentous as are the conditions of our future existence in the spirit-world, must come from mischievous agencies, or arise from the medium's ignorance of the difference between material things of earth and the immaterial, or purely spiritual, of the invisible world.

Professor Flournoy points out the ease with which ordinary sitters who are ignorant of the difficulties of Spiritism, imagine they receive messages from the other world, while, on the other hand, scientific experts of the Society for Psychical Research, even when spiritistic in conviction, like Hodgson and Hyslop, not only rarely find a true medium, but also usually face the impossibility of distinguishing the authentic from the unauthentic in supposed spirit-messages. "For the best mediums," affirms the Professor:

> "constantly mix their dreams and their subliminal reveries with what comes to them from

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the beyond. With the discarnate themselves there are, it seems, such difficulties to overcome in order to communicate with us that we can never be sure of the verbal correctness of any of the messages received.

"Hodgson compared the communication which he held with the dead through the channel of the medium [Mrs. Piper], to the conversation which might take place in this world between two persons widely separated from each other, who are compelled to exchange their messages by means of two messengers, both of them drunk. . . . But if this be so in the case of the most powerful medium of our generation and of a deceased person who had given his life to the solution of this problem, and had resolved to do everything possible after his death to manifest himself to us, what ought it to be in ordinary cases? And how completely duped are those mediums, professional and amateurs, who imagine that they are the recipients of communications coming from innumerable spirits on the other side?"[4]

In a sane moment, Sir Conan Doyle, in speaking of automatic writing, made the following fatal admission: "You are at one end of the telephone, if one may use such a simile, and you have no assurance as to who is at the other end." This fact admitted, how can Sir Conan possibly assert that the communicators at the other end are disembodied souls? Are they not rather other spirits—lying

[4] *Spiritism and Psychology*, p. 183 *et seq.*

spirits—whose many contradictory messages disclose their evil characteristic? To Christians, it must seem irrational to build up a new religion and moral code upon mischievous and inconsistent messages coming from invisible and unverified personalities, whose teaching is absolutely contradictory to a Divine Revelation, which, firmly established by undoubted credentials, has, through nineteen centuries, brought us our present Christian civilization. In rejecting the supernatural here and hereafter, and upholding the merely natural of man's strong animal nature, Spiritism is clearly attempting to turn men back to the dismal gloom of a long defunct paganism.

In proof of the untrustworthy originators of the "New Revelation," we may, again, quote the famous scientist whose calm rational judgment was matured only after many years spent in experimental studies of Spiritism. "When," says Professor Flournoy:

> "people come to understand that the sorting of veritable from unveritable messages is almost always beyond their power, they will perhaps be put out of conceit with experiments in which they have ninety-nine chances against one of being duped by themselves or others, and in which—a still more vexatious matter—if they should even be so fortunate as to light upon the hundredth chance, they would have no certain means of knowing it.
>
> "It appears to me probable that spiritistic practices will lose more and more their charm in pro-

portion to the extent to which science shows us the rarity of authentic messages and the impossibility of recognizing them once received. But it is true that to children paste will always produce the same illusion as veritable jewels."[5]

The spiritistic religion was, from the first, in acute conflict with Divine Revelation as embodied in Sacred Scripture and the teaching of the Universal Church. Its pioneer was Allan Kardec, and he seriously believed himself entrusted with a great mission from the powers on high. He professed to be the mouthpiece of all sorts of illustrious spirits who were comparable with Moses and with Christ. The latter was a mere man in whom was incarnate one of the highest spirits. All the mysteries of the Christian creed were pure fictions, and, in fact, religion as it actually existed, was corrupt and had to be swept away. The spirits told him that

"the new religion is called upon to play an immense part in human affairs. This it is which will reform our legislation, at present so often in conflict with the laws of God. This it is which will restore the religion of Christ now degraded by the priests into a commercial speculation and a vile form of traffic. It will set up the real religion, the natural religion, that which springs from the heart and goes straight to God without being intercepted by the skirts of a cassock or the steps of an altar."[6]

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 186, *et seq.*
[6] Apud *Studies*, Vol. VIII, p. 630.

In Kardec's *New Revelation* was the doctrine of reincarnation, and it became the storm center of Spiritism; for though the spirits taught it on the continent of Europe, other spirits in England and America explicitly rejected it. Critical observers were not slow in emphasizing a contradiction so glaring and so absolutely fatal to any confidence in spiritistic guidance. We shall cite only Professor Charles Richet, the distinguished physiologist of Paris, whose testimony appears undoubtedly unbiased; for he says of himself: "I am neither spiritist, nor theosophist, nor occultist. I do not believe in occult sciences, nor in the supernatural, nor in miracles." The professor writes:

> "The contradiction is formal, positive, and irreconcilable. Those who are inclined to doubt the correctness of what I affirm, have only to glance through and compare the writings of English and French spiritists; for example, those of Allan Kardec, Denys, Delanne and those of Stainton Moses. How are we to form an opinion worthy of acceptance? Which speak the truth? European spirits or Anglo-Saxon spirits? Probably spiritistic messages do not emanate from very well-informed witnesses. Such is the conclusion arrived at by Oksakoff, one of the cleverest and most enlightened of spiritists. He himself acknowledges that one is never certain of the communicating identity at a spiritistic sitting."[7]

[7] *Ibid.*

With the multiplication of literature on Spiritism, new and ever-diverging and contradictory utterances kept pace in different countries. After Kardec, and in opposition to him, arose Mr. Stainton Moses, an ex-Anglican clergyman, whose spirits taught him a sort of milk and water-Broad-Church doctrine, from which all things distinctly Christian were refined away.

Peculiar to these spirits of the "New Revelation," is the fact that, when questioned concerning God, they either resort to evasions or tell their clients they know no more about Him than men do. To them He is, like to our poor mortal Agnostics, the Great Unknown. Question them on the Holy Trinity or the personality of God, and, again, they know nothing. Of course, Christians know that these outcast spirits were never admitted to the presence of God in the beatific heaven, but, in penalty of their sin, are forever deprived of the abundant revelations granted to the faithful angels. Their professed ignorance is, however, shammed; for they know all that God has revealed to the human race, and even more, but, as enemies, they attempt by wiles and falsehoods to impede man's attainment of eternal good. Hence, these "blasphemous goblins" assure us the Saviour is not the Son of God. His claim, they insinuate, was a mere hallucination.

> "His Church, though a superb institution, is but the imperfect beginning of that grand provi-

dential amelioration of mankind of which modern Spiritism is to be the complement and ultimate perfection, which alone can purify, develop, and perfect time-honored Christianity, so that it will take captive every heart, and unite all men in one fold, and inaugurate the millennium of the golden age upon earth. In a word, Spiritism is not the enemy of Christianity; but while hostile to Catholic Christianity, it favors that of the sects, and seeks to unite them with itself, in a complete Christianity unto final perfection."[8]

Such are the fundamental points of Kardec's gospel of Spiritism. Against him, however, are the more recent spiritists who with Sir Conan Doyle preach that Spiritism is not "the complement and perfection of Christianity," but that the Christian religion, having had its day and failed, must either change or perish. Spiritism, as a new and more perfect creed, is now destined to supplant the olden faith, and become the new leaven of mankind.—But such a sorry leaven, to judge from the signs of the times, is sure to meet the same mortal fate of other "isms."

In evidence of the loose thinking, common to the leading minds of Spiritism, we here pause to comment upon certain elucidations of their doctrine as given by Mr. Wallace in his *Defense of Modern Spiritism:*

"Man [he says] is a duality consisting of an organized spiritual form evolved coincidentally

[8] *A. C. Q. R.*, Vol. VII, p. 222.

with and permeating the physical body and having corresponding organs and developments."

Here we have, contrary to the well-established science of psychology, an impossible permixture of spirit and matter. To ascribe to our purely spiritual, or immaterial soul, which is absolutely devoid of parts or of matter, material organs that correspond with those of the physical body is to entertain notions contradictory and necessarily interdestructive. He continues:

"Spiritism is a science of human nature, which is founded upon observed facts and which takes no beliefs on trust."

True, Spiritism, if it were a science, would not stake its "beliefs on trust," but, unfortunately for Mr. Wallace, that is exactly what it does. For, though we grant that certain observed facts are genuine, we do not thereby concede that their causes are souls departed and not "goblins damned." The spiritistic assumption is solely based, in a blind faith, upon the word of invisible agents, and not upon any proof convincing to unbiased rational minds. Again, says Mr. Wallace:

"Spiritism alone is able to harmonize conflicting creeds. It must ultimately lead to concord among mankind in the matter of religion, which has for so many ages been the source of discord and incalculable evil."

Spiritism, we reply, may, no doubt, harmonize

itself with the many conflicting creeds, which are as erroneous as itself, and unite with them, as it does, in their war against the one Universal Church of Christendom. With these warring sects we are not concerned. But, surely, it is preposterous to imagine that Spiritism can enter into an harmonious relation with that Mother Church of Christian civilization which its invisible and hostile agents are intent upon destroying. Such a union can be but that of fire and water. But concludes Mr. Wallace:

> "Spiritism will do this [unify all religions] because it appeals to evidence instead of faith, and substitutes facts for opinions."

The truth, nevertheless, is against him, as was exposed in previous pages. Spiritists, while accepting an assumption in blind faith, have always failed to give in evidence the proofs which many scientific minds of the Society for Psychical Research have for decades been in vain demanding. To say that "spiritists substitute facts for opinions," is but an idle evasion; for, though the facts be admitted, experimenters continue to call for proofs that the causes of these phenomena are the souls of the dead, and not impersonating outcasts, spirits of deception. We may here recall the efforts of the *Scientific American*, which offered a large prize to any spiritist who would solve the problem. Only one responded to the call, and he was detected in clearly-established fraud and trickery.

If the antichristian spirit of the "New Revelation" was, in the earlier stages of Spiritism, at a low ebb in English-speaking countries, no one can, even haphazardly, peruse its literature of more recent times, without perceiving that, year by year, the tide has been rising strongly against all Christian revelation. The change in England, begun by Mr. Stainton Moses,[9] is continued today by Sir Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge. In America, Judge Edmonds, though an enthusiastic believer in Swedenborg's newly-coined tenets concerning life and death and the "New Jerusalem," easily slipped into Spiritism, and, under the influence of its invisible agents, did not hesitate to proclaim, among a Christian people, his change to a disbelief in the Divinity of the Founder of Christianity. He writes:

> "The spirits who were engaged in this work told me at an early date that they were determined now to avoid the error which they had fallen into 1800 years ago, and would not now as in those days concentrate all their powers in one person, so as by their marvelous character to induce an uninstructed age to worship man instead of God."[10]

Another spiritistic light, Mr. R. D. Owen, affirms[11] that Spiritism brushes aside the notions of Original Sin, of Redemption, and justification of men through

[9] *Studies*, Vol. VIII, p. 632.
[10] *Letters and Facts on Spiritualism*, p. 344.
[11] *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1874.

the sacrificial merits of a God made Man, and, furthermore, abolishes the Christian belief in Satan and his fallen angels, who roam the earth all intent on man's moral ruin.

The purpose of such teaching by these invisible agencies is clear to every Christian mind: if they can succeed in inspiring men to unbelief in the existence of Satan and his hordes, they will, of course, in the friendly guise of souls departed, find more easy their evil design of entrapping "mortal fools."

Still more outspoken is the noted spiritist, Mr. T. H. Noyes, who, in an address before the Dialectical Society, in 1874, voiced the common hostility of Spiritism to Divine Christian Revelation. We can cite but a few sentences:

> "I know that we have spirit-friends who are permitted to disabuse our minds of many fallacies which a corrupt priestcraft has taught us to reverence under the guise of religion. . . . Spiritism is to be a new revelation, iconoclastic of all superstition, and bids fair to extinguish the fungoid growth that has obscured the pristine lights of all former revelations. . . . It abolishes as forever the deified devil of the Hebrews, the bloodthirsty god of vengeances, dealing in damnation and hell-fire, the creator of human fuel for eternal flames. . . . It abolishes at one fell swoop the theology of the schoolmen and the mischievous absurdities of such formularies as the Athanasian Creed. It dethrones the blind idol of theological faith, and

> sweeps away the marvelous delusion of the orthodox that believe in fiction as essential to salvation. . . . What wonder, then, that it is denounced by Bibliolaters and the devotees of the devil, scouted by priests, and scoffed at by men of science!"[12]

Well, Mr. Noyes may be assured that Bibliolaters, priests, and scientists are proud of their united purpose of staying the spread of his poisonous weed of mildewed growth in our Christian garden. He is but another sad example of many men of inflated minds, who recall the fabled fly on the whirling chariot wheel. Unable or rather unwilling to learn by the experience of their forebears, they do not understand Macaulay's lesson of the New Zealander standing upon the broken arch of London Bridge.

A Christian will, no doubt, pity the rashness of Mr. Noyes, and perhaps be amazed at his evilly-inspired confidence of destroying the grandest structure of our Christian civilization. His many "fell swoops" and his verbal "abolishments" are but beatings of the air. Mr. Noyes has, he affirms, many spirit-friends who disabuse his mind of fallacies. But it is evident that one fallacy still remains, which his spirit-friends are nurturing unto full development. How is he certain of the nature and purpose of their friendship? Are there not many kinds of spirits, all invisible, spirits of heaven and spirits of hell, as

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[12] *Studies*, Vol. VIII, p. 634.

well as disembodied human souls in divers states of reward or punishment? Should he not in prudence try to discover the true character of his invisible spirit-friends? Had he used the infallible criterion, given by St. John, he would readily have learned that his masquerading spirit-friends, being anti-Christ, are the secret enemies of himself and mankind. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Mr. Noyes' rash hopes recall those of a greater man who, dressed with brief authority, purposed "to extinguish the lights of heaven." His vain boast made him the laughing-stock of many peoples, and, while they hear of his going the way of all flesh, they see the heavens serene, and the "Light of the World" still shining forth in undiminished splendor.

Noyes and Viviani are but smaller types of a greater man, a statesman who by his *Kulturkampf* sought to subject the unyielding Church of Christendom to his newly-fashioned empire. A humorous wit of his day sketched him as fiercely tugging at a rope affixed to the lofty spire of a great cathedral. While pausing from exhaustion, his face glistening with perspiration, he chanced to glance behind him, and there he saw his "Satanine Majesty" in a broad approving grin. "Bravo, bravo!" exclaimed Satan. "I have been at that job for nearly 2000 years and have failed. If you succeed, you shall have the hottest post of honor in my infernal kingdom."

That the "New Revelation" is a hotchpotch of

doctrines as incoherent and inharmonious as is possible, will appear if, after eliminating all its contradictory teachings, we briefly sketch certain tenets on which all spiritists seem to agree.

"1. That the Christian religion is not a divine revelation of a unique and specific character, foreshadowed by the Jewish ordinances, foretold by the prophets, completed in Christ, and consummated on the day of Pentecost; but that it is only one of the many forms of the spirit-manifestations accorded man through the course of ages.

"2. That the Christian notion of a Triune God is a speculative fiction, and that Christ is not the Son of God who, to restore a fallen race, assumed human nature as the Church has taught through the centuries, but a mere man like ourselves, perhaps at best one of the higher spirits of superior gifts and powers, who became incarnate and laid down his life in testimony of the truth of his doctrines.

"3. That the Church's teaching regarding his character, divine personality, purpose of his incarnation, and sacrificial death, is altogether a misconception due to human error and speculation.

"4. That no priesthood was created and specially set apart by Christ for the propagation of his doctrine and the perpetuation of his work of restoring man from a fallen to a lost supernatural state.

"5. That the Church with its sacramental rites is divinely instituted for the cleansing of the human soul and advancing it from a natural to

a supernatural life by means of divine gifts and graces, is a vain thing fondly conceived, and at best a human institution, doing a purely human work; for there was no original sin and, in consequence, no redemptory work by Christ, nor is there any supernatural state here or hereafter.

"6. That the Scriptural notion of hell as a place of retribution after death for sin committed in the flesh, is a misinterpretation of the teaching of Christ; for retribution only takes place in the sense that suffering must follow upon wrong either wilfully or ignorantly done.

"7. That man has not been elevated to a higher state, but that living a merely natural life he moulds his own character for good or evil independently of Christ and his merits and graces, and that by his own acts alone he prepares himself for his own natural heaven or hell, which are wholly different from the Scriptural heaven and hell as taught by the Christian Church.

"8. That the destiny of the human soul at separation from the body is in no sense determined for all time; but that, regardless of beliefs, or misbeliefs, or human acts, it enters upon a course of training and education which are continued and indefinitely prolonged in the varied spheres of the spirit world. Man is, in fact, in the truest sense of the word, his own and sole savior."[13]

These fundamental errors, dictated by invisible agencies, alone suffice to disclose their evil nature to any Christian mind. Forming in the main the "New

[13] Lepicier, O.S.M., *The Unseen World*, p. 279.

Revelation" of the spiritistic creed, they clearly expose that, whilst claiming to advance man's spiritual good, Spiritism, in fact, hampers it by drawing him away from the grand supernatural destiny for which a beneficent Creator made him. The creed's development, keeping pace with "Modern Thought," is marked by a gradually-increasing departure from the essentials of Christianity. For the Christian idea of a personal God and Father whose individual dealings with us, and ours with Him, constitute the prime element of Religion, Spiritism substitutes an indefinite and impersonal World-soul, something like the Pantheistic god, of whom, strange to say, even the highest spirits in "the beyond," profess to know no more than mortal man.

Moreover, by denying the Divinity of Christ and His Redemptory work, and man's salvation by faith in His teaching and its practise, Spiritism removes the firm foundation of Christian faith, which is based on Divine authority, and in its stead, demands of us a blind belief in the *dicta* of invisible agencies whose identity is unproven, and whose veracity, as noted spiritists admit, is never absolutely certain.

Surely, no rational mind can think of sacrificing a world-wide and time-tried faith, which, propagated through the ages by a succession of divinely-commissioned prophets, was in fine perfected unto completion beyond addition by Christ the Lord, for a flimsy creed, grounded on negations and allegations con-

cerning man's future life. This creed, while in contradiction to well-approved Divine revelation, is promulgated by invisible intelligences whose identity cannot be proved and whose duplicity has often been exposed. The issues are too momentous to warrant our rejection of the sanctified faith of the Christian ages in favor of a pretentious upstart "New Revelation," which for its verity has neither positive nor indubious proofs.

Now, we know that the Almighty created man to His own spiritual image and likeness, and destined him to eternal bliss in the home of a loving Father. To enable him to attain this noble destiny, his Creator has made known to him the unfailing means by way of a Divine Revelation, the truthfulness of which, resting on God's infinite veracity, is therefore in value worth the infallible word of Infinite Truth. Such is the rational basis upon which the Christian religion stands, and, through the ages, it has with God's grace led captive generations of the high and the low, and of the ignorant and the wisest of men.

But what of the "New Revelation," born of our materialistic times? Born it is, not indeed of God, but of created beings—spirits that claim no divine inspiration nor commission, but rather deny they have either; for God, they say, neither regards the actions of His creatures, nor communicates with them. Their revelations are, therefore, entirely their own, and, being fallible, must, as even spiritists affirm,

"be judged and tested just as those of our fellowmen." But how preposterous is the notion of fallible creatures perfecting or supplanting the revelations of an infallible God!

Spiritistic revelations, being, then, nothing more than the testimony of fallible spirits to things unseen and unknown to us, must be tested by some criterion. But, besides the infallible criterion of St. John, as already given, there is another—the trial of their knowledge and veracity. In both, they may fail, as finite creatures fail, and both, therefore, must be proved before their testimony merits our acceptance. Now, in courts of justice, the veracity of a witness is always measured, not only by his good or bad character, but also by his words. If he contradict himself, his testimony is worthless; if he utter what is manifestly absurd, his words are rejected without ceremony. In brief, according to common law the testimony of a witness is reliable only when his truthfulness and his knowledge are beyond impeachment.

Absolutely failing in these two necessary requirements, spiritists are compelled to appeal to displays of personal gifts or powers on the part of invisible agencies, in proof of the veracity of their communications. Such appeals are vain and worthless; for we have seen that the most astounding physical and intellectual feats are within the natural powers of fallen spirits, all regardless of their mendacity or veracity.

"How a Milo of Crete could prove his veracity by carrying an ox around the Amphitheater," or how a spirit could do so by rapping or tilting a table, or moving articles of furniture, or by reading the shifting panorama of a man's imagination, baffles the understanding. Such and similar spiritistic actions only manifest the existence of an invisible agent, and his possession of unusual powers; but in no wise do they prove his veracity. Since, then the credibility of the "New Revelation" depends upon the knowledge and veracity of its invisible and unidentified originators, these must be tested by an examination of their character and their statements.

For this purpose, we have ample means in the accounts of these spirits, as published by spiritists themselves. Dixon, in America, Wallace in England, Kardec in France and Zöllner in Germany, all, as acknowledged oracles of the cult, have, from these spirits, common disregard for truth, concluded that, apparently by some law of their nature, they accommodate themselves to the whims, or prejudices, or beliefs of their devotees, becoming shamelessly in the same séance, Pantheists, or Mohammedans, or Jews, or Protestants, or Catholics, as best suits their purpose. In the great German spiritistic organ *Licht Mehr Licht* (1879), a chief representative writes:

> "The majority of the spirits are not honest. . . . They maliciously lead men into error and to ruin. . . . By opening the sluices of

the spirit-world we have conjured up an impure flood."[14]

Since, then, Spiritism, itself, in its leading minds, reprobates the character of the founders of the new cult, must not sane minds hold their revelations to be vain and worthless? In explanation of the indubitable fact that communicating spirits exhibit a common tendency to contradictions and to falsehoods, certain spiritistic authors, like a drowning man catching at straws, resort to three bald assumptions: first, "that the knowledge, attainments, and experience of earth-life, form the basis of spirit-life"; second, "that death effects no change in the spirits morally or intellectually"; and third, "that the souls of the dead are attracted to those they love or sympathize with on earth."

From these assumptions, they argue that since the vast majority of mortals are foolish, mischievous, untruthful, immoral, and ungodly, they attract multitudes of kindred spirits, who, in passing to the other world, have taken their evil characteristics with them. Reimers, a celebrated German spiritist, writes:

> "Since on account of materialism all mankind has become degenerate, it is easy to explain the fact that by opening the sluices of the spirit-world, an impure flood is conjured up. Only private circles actuated by religiousness free from hypocrisy, lead to such results as harmonize the

[14] A. C. Q. Rev., Vol. *VII*, p. 524.

beauty of the new revelation with the unadulterated essence of Christianity and other religions."[15]

These assumptions, all of the imagination, though a severe arraignment of human nature, do not, even if granted, explain the facts; for on record are innumerable instances of spirits of evil character attempting to communicate in private, as well as in public circles, with persons well-known for their good moral principles and virtuous lives. In them we have a manifest refutation of the attempted explanation that like attracts like.

What of other spirits—the minority—who are supposed to be of a higher order? These, the same authors imagine, are not only often hindered by wicked companions from approaching their friends on earth, but are also impersonated by them for their own malicious purpose. Is it the old story of the devil appearing as an angel of light? How worthless, then, must be the revelations of these invisible agents, who may, for all we know, be goblins damned, and for whose identity we have nothing more than their word?

But even when the agencies are spirits of the higher order, we are still subject to deception; for many spiritists frankly admit that these, no less than the lower class, follow the law of accommodating themselves to the whims or errors of their terrestrial

[15] *Ibid.*

friends, with the sole difference that "their wickedness and deceptions are only of a more educated sort, a perfect counterpart of the splendid villainy of high life."[16] The recklessness of contradiction exhibited by these invisible agencies, whether high or low, has been the bane to the noted spiritists who have sought to bring some order out of the chaos of spiritistic revelations. Kardec and Zöllner confess to undergoing the Herculean labor of examining, comparing, and rejecting volumes upon volumes of spirit-contradictions, before they could find coherent elements sufficient for framing the "New Revelation." It is, therefore, as given to the world, the work of Kardec and his followers, rather than of the spirits themselves. From his labors, Wallace reached the sane conclusion that all communications of spirits are characteristically fallible, and therefore wise men will do well to test and judge them.

To examine honestly the errancies and contradictions of these spirits, is to unmask their untruthful character, and, that unmasked, they are clearly seen as prevaricating witnesses, whose words are nothing worth. The fact is of prime importance, for everything in the "New Revelation" rests on the veracity of the spirits, and with its destruction falls the spirit-temple. Like the house of the foolish man in Scripture, it is built upon sand, "and the rain fell, and

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[16] *Licht, Mehr Licht* (1879).

the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof."[17]

As a last stand, spiritists affirm that it is unnatural for the whole race of spirits to agree in deceiving man concerning supreme truths affecting their future life; for, like man, they too must have a natural inborn love of truth, and, hence, with them to speak the truth is the rule; to deceive, the exception.

The argument, however, is of little worth; for it is based on the erroneous assumption that the only kinds of spirits are the souls of the dead. It ignores the existence of angels, both celestial and infernal, as well as the distinction, which spiritists themselves admit, between human souls that are good, and others that are wicked—wicked as in earth-life, and, in consequence, they illogically and gratuitously assume in all these spirits, whether goblins damned or wicked souls, a common friendship with mankind. Is not such an assumption fatuous? Spiritists are utterly unable to offer any satisfactory proof whereby we can positively identify the personality of these invisible, communicating spirits, and learn their true character, whether good or evil. That any presumption in favor of such friendship is untenable, is clear from the dark descriptions which leading spirits themselves have, as already noted, given of these invisible agencies.

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[17] *Matt.* vii, 27.

The hostility of the spirits of Spiritism to mankind is not at all unnatural. It is reasonably accounted for, not only by Divine Revelation, but also by the professed principles of the spiritistic cult itself. It claims that all the prophets of the Old Law, as well as the wonder-working saints of the New, were spiritistic mediums of a superior order, through whom the higher spirits spoke and acted. Thus, "Imperator," the "spirit-control" of Stainton Moses, claimed to be the prophet Malachy himself, and "Rector," another "control," was St. Hippolytus of Portus. But above them all, was Christ the Lord, "who was the noblest spirit that ever became incarnate, and so surprisingly great, that he needed no medium beyond his own body, wherewith to work his wonders."

Now, granting, for the sake of argument, that these wild fancies are realities, we invoke against spiritists their own prime and fixed principle, that the higher the spirits, the greater is the value, and the more compelling the credibility of their revelations. Again, they hold that the spirits, who were the "controls" of mediums so extraordinary as the prophets and the Apostles, were of a higher order than any that visit the séances of our day; yet all these supposed mediums, both Apostles and Saints, were, as we know, unanimous in testifying against Spiritism, that Christ is the Son of God, that the Christian Revelation is divine in its origin; and all implicitly or explicitly denounced necromancy under every form.

Furthermore, granting the spiritistic claim that Christ was the most exalted medium of all time, in whom dwelt the noblest spirit that ever became incarnate, it follows that His revelations are, above all others, the most reliable ever made to man. Now, what was His practise in regard to spirits? Did He mistake Satan, masquerading in friendly guise in the desert, for some soul departed? Did He seek the "spirit-controls" of the unfortunate men who were brought to Him, converse with them, or recognize them as souls of the dead? No, His eye divine pierced their disguise, and He banished them from their victims, and, when they would confess His power and Divinity He instantly silenced them; for He would not have men accept such testimony concerning Him.

What, again, is His teaching concerning spirits? It is clear and positive, He saw Lucifer and his rebellious cohorts "falling like lightning from heaven." His teachings were promulgated by His Apostles, and they tell us in Holy Writ that one-third of heaven's hosts were, for sedition, stricken by Divine Justice, and that now, outcasts of heaven, they wander on earth, the enemies of God and man, seeking by deceits, wiles, and marvels, under the leadership of the "Father of Lies," to seduce mankind from the allegiance due to God.[18]

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[18] "I saw an angel," says St. John, "coming down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

Who can fail to identify those tempting spirits by their works? If any Christian from culpable ignorance be still in doubt, let him turn to Reimer, a celebrated German spiritist, whom we have already quoted as affirming that the majority of the spirits are not honest. They maliciously lead men into error and to ruin.

Moreover, while spiritists, on the testimony of numerous scientific investigators, are unable to identify the personality of these invisible agencies, they are further confronted with the impossibility of verifying the truth or falsehood of the spirit-messages, from which they have constructed the "New Revelation." On their own admission, all such communications are fallible, and should be tested by men. To impanel a grand jury of citizens for the purpose of adjudging such revelations to be true or false is,

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And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent which is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. And he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up and set a seal upon him, that he should no more seduce the nations, till the thousand years be finished. And after that he must be loosed a little time."—*Apoc.* xx.

The thousand years, say St. Gregory and other Fathers of the Church, signify an indefinite period extending from the time of Christ till near the end of the world, when, at the advent of Antichrist, Satan will be loosed for a brief time. In the meanwhile he is permitted to send forth his minions to earth, where they may try men's souls according to the measure and manner ordained by Divine Providence.—Suarez, Bk. VIII, Chap. XVII. Speaking of this trial, St. Thomas says that a man's welfare is disposed by Divine Providence in two ways: the one directly, as when, through the aid of his guardian angel, he is led into good and withheld from evil; the other indirectly, as when, assailed by a tempting spirit, he is exercised and strengthened in virtue by fighting for good against evil.—*Sum. Theol.* P. I, 64, a. 4.

indeed, while harmless and ridiculous, a cunning device of those invisible agencies. Men's judgments are fallible and impeachable at all times, but especially so when dealing with invisible spirits who, possessing intellectual powers beyond the human, are notorious for stratagems and wiles. No man can ever demonstrate the truth of their messages. Some are repugnant to reason, others lie beyond the reach of man's mind and experience. What mortal can peer beyond the grave into the spirit-world, or by reasoning vindicate the spiritistic doctrine of the preexistence of souls, their transmigration, the grades of spirits, their constant and indefinite progress, and that the spirits of Spiritism are in truth dead men's ghosts? Such assertions can be verified neither by human experience, nor memory, nor by argument. Man, in his mortal life, can of himself know nothing of alleged facts of the invisible world. For their reality he must depend entirely upon the veracity of invisible agencies, and since their words have been found false on innumerable occasions, their veracity must be always tested by men—fallible men—a hopeless task; for from them are hidden, not only the witnesses in their person and character, but also the invisible and intangible facts in question. Verily, spiritists have enmeshed themselves in a vicious circle.

To dignify the new cult, and to gain for it some respectability, a few leading spiritists have labored to array it, to some degree, in the consecrated garb

of Christianity; but, nevertheless, every Christian, piercing the clumsy masquerade, sees in it a wolf in sheep's clothing. Every Christian knows that it cannot be the development nor the outgrowth of Divine Revelation; for, on the authority of God, as expressed in the Sacred Books, His revelation reached its entireness and completion in His Eternal Son incarnate and His Apostles, and, therefore, it can admit of no change nor addition. Against such innovation by Spiritism or other "isms," Holy Writ has in advance launched its anathemas. To this immutability of divinely-revealed truths, stands opposed the so-called revelation of invisible and unidentified spirits, with its monstrous innovations and radical changes. It offers no exposition of the Christian faith, but, with the single exception of the dogma of creation, it contradicts them all. In truth, no opposition can be imagined that is more positive, irreconcilable, and deadly than that between Spiritism and the divinely-established Church of Christendom. Christianity begins and ends in God; Spiritism begins and ends in man. Christianity seeks to elevate man to God; Spiritism, to debase all that is God-like to man's low level. In imitation of its founder—that proud rebellious spirit who sought to center all in himself, independently of his Creator—Spiritism panders to man's self-importance and self-love to overflowing, prompts him to flout all Divine aid, to help himself-all-sufficient out of his own resources,

and to care for nothing above his own human nature and its natural gratification. In a word, it destroys the supernatural and deifies the natural.

Vain is the claim of Spiritism that its "New Revelation" forms a new religion; it lacks the essential elements of religion as understood by men through the ages. The prime purpose of religion is to teach man the truth concerning his relation and obligations toward his Creator, and to give him the moral guidance necessary to reach his supreme destiny. This truth, fundamental to Christianity, is also verified in heathen religions in relation to their gods, as we see in Brahmanism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Shintoism. But Spiritism offers no tangible moral doctrines nor guidance necessary for a practical religion. Its spirits profess to know no more of God than we do. They deny His love and care for man, as well as the possibility of our knowing Him or having any relation with Him. In fact, Spiritism, in destroying the very foundation of religion, becomes a religion without a God, leaving man entirely to himself, a slave of his own limitations, a victim of his own imperfections. This is pure paganism, the very antithesis of Christianity, and was reached, and can still be reached, without a spiritistic revelation.

Studied in its teaching and practise, Spiritism compels the conclusion that it is the sworn enemy of God and man. Its boasted "New Revelation," replete with false doctrines, all of them ruinous to man's

higher life, and many of them blasphemous against God, must appear to the Christian mind "a wholesale diabolical mockery of the Creator," worthy of him who, for aspiring to be equal to the Most High, had his pride brought down even unto hell, and is doomed to be forever the *Simia Dei*, "the ape of God."

CHAPTER XVII

PHYSICAL AND MORAL EVILS

TO TRACE the evil effects of spiritistic practises upon the health and moral character, offers certain difficulties which arise from the want of statistics on the subject, and this, in turn, is due to the fact that the victims, on the one hand, are not paraded by their friends to public view, and, on the other, that those who are safely marooned for treatment in some asylum, have not the cause of their trouble definitely assigned and published. Nevertheless, it is of certain knowledge, says Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J., that the experience of the last seventy years proves the atmosphere of Spiritism to be thoroughly unhealthy. It is known to develop morbid tendencies, and to check the invigorating reaction of common sense. While there is nothing to show that the devotees of the spiritistic cult have become better men or better citizens, there is much to indicate that they often become cranks, or faddists, or otherwise oddly affected, even when deterioration stops short of complete mental decay.

Another Catholic author writes:

> "Any intimacy with the practises of Spiritism, no matter how we believe the phenomena to be produced, endangers our moral, physical, and

> religious health. It is probably an exaggeration to say, as some do, that those active in spiritistic practises become in time afflicted with insanity in some form or other, but it is no exaggeration to say that they pay the price in some fashion, spiritual or physical."[1]

Exaggeration is not, as we purpose to show, on the part of experts, such as eminent physicians, scientific experimenters, and leading spiritists, but on the part of others innumerable who, failing to distinguish between true and false mediums, imagine that to the latter are also attributed evil effects of spiritistic practises. But in the present question, fictitious mediums of all kinds must be brushed aside. They, as we have seen, are multitudinous, forming, says Dr. Carrington, about ninety-eight per cent. Their trances and other works, being only simulated, cannot affect them as in the case of true mediums. The evil effects, therefore, which the authorities that we shall quote, ascribe to spiritistic practises, must be understood to apply only to real sensitives who operate solely in the trance state. When thus limited, there appears but little exaggeration.

Though it be needless to repeat, however applicable, what was said concerning mediums in a previous chapter, it is well to dwell upon an objection that has for some an apparent force. Well-known mediums, say they, have not suffered from spiritistic

[1] De Heredia, S.J., *Spiritism and Common Sense*, p. 165.

practises, and, in proof, they cite the example of Mrs. Piper of Boston.

Against them shall be gathered many witnesses. But "one swallow makes not a spring, nor one woodcock a winter." No general law was ever made that had not one or more exceptions. Yet Mrs. Piper was not altogether an exception; an eye-witness, Dr. Bourget says of her: "She gets into a trance with much difficulty, moans, loosens her hair, twists her fingers, heaves great sighs, and has contortions of her chest."[2]

If Mrs. Piper did not suffer as much as Mr. Home, Mr. Stainton Moses, Eusapia Palladino, and many other famous mediums, it was because of her exceptional circumstances which, under the ordinary conditions of life, are not readily secured by many sensitives. Of a robust constitution, and living a careful and well-regulated life, Mrs. Piper was in possession of ample means, and exercised great care and discretion in the choice of the members of her circle. Under a restraint dictated by prudent experience, she gave sittings very sparingly in number and duration, and, as a consequence, was, unlike the generality of mediums, enabled to regain and husband anew the nervous energy expended. Like Mrs. Piper is Mrs. Osborne Leonard of England, and several others who do not become common hacks, but

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[2] Grasset, M.D., *The Marvels beyond Science*, p. 145.

in prudential caution command their sittings and control the conditions.

As statistics on the subject are wanting, we must recur to recognized authorities. Dr. G. M. Robertson, the Medical Superintendent of the Morningside Asylum at Edinburgh, whose official report, based on personal experience, pointed no doubt to like conditions in similar institutions, writes as follows in his *Annual Report* for 1916:

> "I find it necessary at this time, as the result of several cases that have come under my care, to utter a note of warning to those who are seeking consolation in their sorrows by practical experiments in the domain of Spiritism. . . . I desire to warn those who may possibly inherit a latent tendency to nervous disorders, to have nothing to do with practical inquiries of a spiritualistic nature, lest they should waken this predominant proclivity within their brains. I have known such a person who had lost her son, first hearing of him through mediums, then getting in touch with him herself and receiving messages from him, some as impressions and others as audible words, till finally God conversed with her in a low musical voice at all times, and confided His plans for the future to her. I would ask spiritualists where in this case does Spiritualism end and mental disorder begin?"[3]

Almost every physician and priest in popular centers, writes Father Thurston, has come across

[3] *Studies*, Vol. IX, p. 244.

similar examples, as I have done myself, though happily the mischief does not always go so far as to involve the complete overthrow of reason. It hardly needs saying that the mediums themselves are more exposed to danger physically and morally than other persons.

To avoid any appearance of exaggeration, let us further invoke the testimony of eminent medical talent, as well as of scientific experimenters who are well qualified to speak with authority on the subject:

> "The great lesson [writes Dr. Hudson] which psychic science teaches is that all psychic activity is not only abnormal, but also in the highest degree injurious to the body as well as to the mind. The class of psychics known as mediums, are to the last degree neurotic. Exceptions may be found only in cases where the psychic powers are of very recent development. The fact remains that habitual indulgence in psychic practises of any kind, grade, or character invariably result in some form of nervous development or disease; and if carried to excess or continued long, will result in insanity or imbecility."[4]

Dr. Hammond, in his able work entitled *Spiritualism and Nervous Derangement*, has, says Dr. Hudson, forever settled the relations between psychic conditions and nervous diseases. He writes as follows:

> "Psychic conditions and nervous diseases are always concomitant. Psychic activity may be

[4] *Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life*, p. 300.

> either the cause or the result of nervous disease. That they invariably accompany each other is demonstrated by the facts: first, that no one can become a good psychic until a nervous derangement has been induced; second that the best psychics are those whose nervous systems are completely shattered; and third, that the degree of psychic power attainable by anyone is in exact proportion to the intensity of his nervous derangement. It requires an intensely abnormal condition of both mind and body to enable anyone to achieve success in the psychic world: and this is true without reference to the character of the manifestation, from the simplest telepathic experiment in an apparently normal state, down to the deepest trance that was ever induced in a passive victim of spiritistic practise."

The conclusions of this recognized eminent physician are approved by the testimony of many who have witnessed the common distress of mediums during trance, and their mental and physical condition on recovering therefrom. We have noted that the state of passivity which mediumship induces, tends to subvert mental balance, to impair or destroy self-control, and, in cases of materialization, to tax the medium's vital force so severely as to become in course of time irreparable. In such instances the entranced medium remains a helpless and passive instrument in the hands of invisible agents who utilize his very life-energies for materialization. A Catholic author of long experience in Spiritism writes:

"The fit-like shaking and trembling of the entranced psychic, as her vital energies are being withdrawn, is an evidence that a process is at work that is against nature, and which is a violent removal of the barriers that nature has erected."[5]

As an expert, he sums up his observations concerning physical phenomena as follows:

"The exercise of mediumship is almost always attended by physical exhaustion, and frequently by a complete mental prostration which produces a kind of moral paralysis and inertia of the will. Sometimes there are cataleptic seizures, contortions of the muscles of the face, which are all of them conditions repulsive to healthy and normally-constituted minds."[6]

Of the same tenor is the testimony of the famous Sir William Crookes, who devoted forty years to spiritistic experiment. Concerning the séances given by Mr. Home, the most noted medium of his day, Sir William writes:

"After witnessing the painful state of nervous and bodily prostration in which some of these experiments had left Mr. Home—after seeing him lying in almost fainting condition on the floor, pale and speechless, I could scarce doubt that the evolution of psychic force is accompanied by a corresponding drain on vital force."[7]

Professor Lombroso, with other French scientific

[5] *New Black Magic*, p. 74.
[6] *Dangers of Spiritism*, p. 143.
[7] *Spirit Phenomena and Their Interpretation*, p. 52.

researchers, had invited Eusapia Palladino, a medium of international reputation, to give in their presence a number of séances under the strictest observation. Of these experiments the Professor gives a report in his work entitled *After Death—What?* We quote an extract:

> "Toward the end of the trance, when the more important phenomena occur, Eusapia falls into trance convulsions and cries out like a woman who is lying in, or else falls into a profound sleep, while from the aperture in the parietal bone of her head there exhales a warm fluid or vapor, sensible to the touch. . . . After the séance, she is overcome by morbid sensitiveness, hyperaesthesia, photophobia, and often by hallucinations and delirium (during which she asks to be watched from harm), and by serious disturbances of digestion, followed by vomiting if she has eaten anything before the séance, and finally by true paresis of the legs, on account of which it is necessary for her to be carried and to be undressed by others. . . . Nor are these morbid phenomena peculiar to Eusapia; they may be observed and verified in other mediums."[8]

Such conditions of the medium, when under the control of an invading spirit, aptly remind the Christian of like manifestations in the possessed, of whom we read in the New Testament. Sir William Barrett, an eminent physicist and noted experimenter in Spiritism, writes:

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

"There is certainly some evidence indicating that continual sittings for physical phenomena cause an illegitimate and excessive drain on the vitality of the medium, creating a nervous exhaustion which is apt to lead in extreme cases to mental derangement or to an habitual resort to stimulants, with no less deplorable end.

"The danger to the medium lies, in my opinion, not only in the loss of spiritual stamina, but in the possible deprivation of that birthright we each are given to cherish—our individuality, our true selfhood; just as in another way this may be impaired by sensuality, opium or alcohol.

"It is this weakening of the sense of personal responsibility that constitutes the chief peril of Spiritualism. Hence your gates should be guarded with zealous care; even the level-headed should walk warily, and the excitable and the emotional should have nothing to do with it; for the fascination of the subject is like a candle to the moth. It attracts and burns the silly, the credulous and the crazy."[9]

From physical evils, we turn to others of the moral order. Of these, the same Sir William sums up his many years of experience as follows: "As a rule I have observed the steady downward course of mediums who sit regularly." This evil tendency has marked every stage of the spiritistic movement from its very origin. The evils were notorious in the case of the Fox sisters, who, as previously exposed, are

[9] *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, p. 250, *et. seq.*

the acknowledged founders of modern Spiritism. Their sad story of physical and moral degradation ought to offer to the unsophisticated sufficient matter for reflection. A stream cannot rise above its source, and, if that fountain source is tainted, its waters must be unsanitary.

Horace Greeley attended many sittings of the Fox sisters at his home, whither his wife, after the loss of a child, had invited them. In their later distress, he proved a true friend; but his efforts were futile. In his memoirs, published twenty years after, he gives his judgment on the morals of Spiritism during the first decades of its existence. He writes:

> "On the whole (though I say it with regret), it seems to me that the great body of the spiritualists have not been rendered better men and women—better husbands, wives, parents, children—by their new faith. . . . I judge that laxer notions respecting marriage, divorce, chastity, and stern morality generally have advanced in the wake of Spiritualism."[10]

Since his day, the morality of Spiritism has not improved, but apace with its extension has continued on a downward course. In fact, it is not easy, says Father Thurston, to exaggerate the lamentations, constantly appearing in all journals devoted to Spiritism, over the depravity and lack of principles so frequently exhibited by the mediumistic fraternity.

[10] *Recollections of a Busy Life* (1869), p. 240.

Here is a frank admission taken from a leading article in the *Spiritualist* of June 25, 1875:

> "The celebrated Neapolitan medium, Eusapia Palladino, took to bad courses under the rule of evil spirits, nor up to the latest accounts from Signor Damiani which were published in this journal, were her best friends able to save her.
>
> "Two American mediums of great power who visited England some years ago, forged two cheques for a large amount before they left this country, and at times seemed scarcely to have any consciousness whether they were telling the truth or the reverse. . . . Among the lower order of mediums also are some who have made desperate attempts to ruin each other by the deliberate invention and circulation of the most atrocious scandals about each other; indeed, if all that is known upon these subjects could be brought together and printed in one volume, a depth of depravity would be revealed which is simply appalling."[11]

If this charge of "an appalling depth of moral depravity" current among mediums, were made by some anti-spiritist or Catholic author, many, no doubt, would call it gross exaggeration, and ascribe it to the credulity or overheated imagination of the writer. But when the charge is made by the editor of a recognized organ of Spiritism, who speaks from inside information, how can an outsider who is ignorant of the inner workings of the cult, call his words in

[11] Apud *Studies*, Vol. IX, p. 248.

question? Can we justly suppose him, a zealous spiritist, to be guilty of maligning his own religion? Such a supposition is untenable. His testimony, moreover, stands not alone. Though it is confirmed by many other competent witnesses, as exposed in previous pages, we may further quote the eminent spiritist, Mr. Stainton Moses, who, after abandoning the Anglican ministry, devoted to the propagation of Spiritism all his energies till his death in 1892. His spiritistic writings have won for him a chair among the "Doctors of Israel," and, in consequence, his confessions merit grave consideration. He writes:

> "Too often what happens is this. A number of persons assemble . . . all, in nine cases out of ten, unfit for one or more causes for the solemn work they have undertaken. The burden is more than the medium can bear; and if he be a model of integrity, a very storehouse of psychic power, he becomes distressed and broken down. His nerves are shattered; he is open to the assaults of all the malicious trickery of spirits that his vocation brings him into contact with, and as a consequence he is in grievous peril of moral, or mental, or of physical deteriorations. Then comes the necessary sequel: temptation, obsession, fraud, buffoonery, and all that we so lament as associated with phenomenal Spiritism."[12]

Worse, still, is the testimony of another accredited witness, in the person of the eminent American

[12] *Spirit Identity*, p. 21.

physician, Dr. B. F. Hatch. As the husband of Mrs. Cora V. Hatch, a famous medium operating in many cities of the Union, he affirms that he had extensive opportunities of acquiring valuable information concerning the inner workings of Spiritism, and of becoming intimately acquainted with the character of its adepts and devotees. In consequence, he lays just claims, he says, of being a competent witness in the matter. Though expressing fear of offending many who are less acquainted with the phenomena than himself, he is resolved to expose, from his own experience, the dangers attending spiritistic practises. While firmly believing in the phenomena of Spiritism, he writes as follows:

> "I have heard much of the improvement in individuals from a belief in Spiritualism. With such I have had no acquaintance. But I have known many whose integrity of character and uprightness of purpose rendered them worthy examples to all around, but who, on becoming mediums and giving up their individuality, also gave up every sense of honor and decency. A less degree of severity in this remark will apply to a large class of mediums and believers. There are thousands of high-minded and intelligent spiritualists who will agree with me that it is no slander in saying that the inculcation of no doctrine in this country, has ever shown such disastrous moral and social results as the spiritual theories. . . . With but little inquiry, I have been able to count up over seventy mediums,

most of whom have wholly abandoned their conjugal relations, others living with their paramours called "affinities," others in promiscuous adultery, and still others exchanged partners. Old men and women, who have passed the meridian of life, are not infrequently the victims of this hallucination."[13]

Needless to enlarge upon the growing practise of free love, as noted by Dr. Hatch. We shall quote in confirmation but one witness, Mr. Algernon Joy, the Secretary of the British National Association of Spiritists. After his travels in America, he made an address before the Association, from which we quote the following sentences:

"Because of the doctrine of Free Love being so much mixed up with Spiritualism, there are many spiritualists who never mention this belief, because they do not wish to be mixed up with the disputed question. . . . I was told that probably one-third of the acknowledged spiritualists in the United States are Free Lovers, and that is a reason why many who are spiritualists in faith, do not avow it."[14]

That another evil of Spiritism, known as obsession, is not uncommon, may be seen in spiritistic literature. Mr. Stainton Moses often recurs to the subject, and other experimenters, like Mrs. Travers Smith, are sufficiently convinced of the unpleasant

[13] Hatch, *Spiritualism Unveiled*, Apud "Black Magic," p. 182.
[14] *Studies*, Vol. IX, p. 254.

consequences as to urge extreme caution. Mrs. Maria M. King, an enthusiastic spiritist, admits, in her book on the cult, the existence of obsession, but concludes that it is produced by spirits who, meaning well, unwittingly interpose their mischievous influences. Her explanation, while admitting the evil, does not mitigate it. It is of interest to note her words:

> "Obsessions by this grade of spirits are common among the lower class of investigators who hold circles for amusement and to gratify idle curiosity. Examples are not wanting where obsessions in such circles, have ended disastrously for sensitives who have acted the part of mediums under an influence they were unable to resist.
>
> "Strong men have been smitten with a species of madness that has developed into insanity and culminated, in some instances, in self-destruction by starvation or other means. The instances of this character that have occurred and are occurring among both sexes in consequence of the misapplication of the law of development are more numerous than is generally supposed."[15]

Without dwelling upon these fatal admissions, we may mention an instance which an eminent English physician narrates in the *Theosophist* of May, 1880. His patient, he writes, was being made a medium against his will. After attending a few séances, he was often more or less subject to persecutions of the

[15] *Principles of Nature*, Vol. III, p. 42.

controlling spirit, so that, in spite of his every effort to throw off the influence, he was made to suffer most shamefully and painfully. And, adds the physician, "the most painful features are such as I cannot write to you." The unfortunate man had become "the bond slave of evil powers which forced him to say and to do painful and even disgusting things, despite his resistance."[16]

These physical and moral evils, as attested by eminent physicians, scientific experimenters, and leading lights of the cult, show the foolhardiness of the itinerant Sir Conan Doyle in urging spiritistic practises upon promiscuous audiences. Saner is the counsel of a superior man. Differing, as a physicist, from the novelist in mental training and occupation, Sir Oliver Lodge exhibits a mind less ruled by plays of fancy than by calm and judicious reasoning, and, moreover, his habitual study of tracing effects to their causes, and *vice versa*, makes him a safer guide as to spiritistic practises. Hence, his caution:

> "If a rudimentary power exists, it is not always desirable to cultivate it. For some people it would be injudicious, and for many others hardly worth while. Moreover, great care and intelligence are needed to utilize a faculty of the kind, and unless a person be well balanced, self-critical and wholesomely occupied, he had better leave the subject alone."[17]

[16] *Studies*, Vol. IX, p. 256.
[17] *Raymond*, Chap. VIII.

Such is the caution of the leading spiritist of our day; but far saner is the counsel of a physicist who, though an experimenter in Spiritism, is totally against the practise. Says Sir William Barrett: "The fascination of the subject is like a candle to the moth. It attracts and burns the silly, the credulous and the crazy." The Professor's judgment is confirmed by the medical profession in Europe and America. Physicians, in unison with psychologists, have repeatedly protested against the fatuous entrance upon the perilous quicksands that lie concealed beneath the specious forms of Spiritism—forms which, seemingly simple and harmless, are attended with fatal consequences. The fascination which a certain class of minds finds in spiritistic practises, is almost irresistible, and becomes more intensified by the characteristic elusiveness and lack of finality common to such communications. In consequence, the victim roused to a chronic state of expectancy, is incessantly impelled to satiate an ever-increasing craving for further disclosures.

Dr. Laponi, voicing the judgment of many eminent physicians, has branded all superstitious practises as dangerous to mental and moral health, and his warning, he says, is based upon personal experience, which has brought him in contact with the ever-increasing victims of the new spiritistic cult.[18]

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[18] *Eccles. Rev.*, Vol. LIX, p. 474, *et seq.*

The loss of the Christian religion is another real danger, and perhaps the worst, because, being fundamental, it leads to other evils. True morality that is lasting, effective, and worthy of the name, is based on the principles and sacred sanctions of a supernatural religion, which the Ruler of the Universe has given man for his guidance to life eternal. That religion and its awe-inspiring sanctions once destroyed, man is reduced to the natural in common with the brute creation, and becomes but the plaything of unrestrained passions. But Spiritism, as previously exposed, aims primarily at destroying the supernatural, or Christian religion, with its influence over the minds and hearts of men.

A stray Catholic, either in spite of his religion, or in crass ignorance of it, or from non-Christian associations, is sometimes seduced into spiritistic practises. But, in spurning the voice of conscience, as well as the positive prohibition of the Almighty, he usually pays the penalty, as experience shows, in the loss of his religion, and that loss entails other evils of the physical and moral order. In proof, we have the testimony of many who, as "shepherds of the flock," have had dealings with such unfortunate Catholics. They find that impersonating spirits usually employ the indirect method of attacking their religion. As an open assault might repel them and so endanger success, they proceed slowly and cautiously, gradually suggesting and cunningly insinuat-

ing thoughts against the essentials of their Christian faith. By frequent communications doubts are in time engendered, which, at the wily urgings of these masquerading agencies, are made to appear, especially to the less well instructed, as overwhelming and unanswerable, and the Catholic in the state of sin, being under the influence of these evil spirits, fails to have recourse to the one saving Power, and so falls, in fine, a prey to scepticism or unbelief.

In proportion as the Catholic's faith is undermined, he feels a growing dislike for the sacraments, and often so strong an aversion for prayer that any attempt thereat seems to rouse a sense of torture. His trusted spirits having broken down the safeguards of his faith, he feels no longer a devotion to the Virgin Mother who was predestined to crush the serpent's head, and with its loss also follows the loss of his former veneration for our Divine Saviour. Once addicted to prayer from the consciousness of his own feebleness and dependence on God, he is led to yield to a new-born sense of pride and independence that inspires him to look in all things not to God, but to his invisible friends for guidance.

By reason of his ever-increasing communications with his guiding spirits, there results, in course of time, an abnormal condition of mind which actually becomes habitual, and, in many known cases, culminates in a nervous and mental breakdown. The

symptoms clearly manifested, in spite of himself, sometimes appear identical, but more frequently resemble those of undoubted obsession or possession. In the meanwhile his moral nature, like his mental, has, under the influence and teaching of his invisible mentors, undergone a marked deterioration. The oft-repeated mingling of filthy words and abominable phrases in his daily spirit communications has sown, like noisome seeds in his imagination, the germs of wicked thoughts and desires which, as in many devotees, fructify into Free Love and gross sins of immorality.

The evils consequent upon the Christian's loss of divine faith and inspiring aspirations of a supernatural religion, not only destroy the happiness he formerly found in its practise, but also bring upon his soul tormenting doubts, which encloud his mind and oppress his heart with a deepening melancholy. In increasing misery which renders life intolerable, he feels an ever-recurring impulse to communicate anew with spirit guides. But despondency only deepens, and his mind completely averted from God's warnings and judgments, he grows daily more benumbed with a hopelessness verging on despair, and this feeling of abysmal gloom is often accompanied by compelling thoughts of self-destruction. This fact we have seen attested by many competent authorities. Here recurs the evil inspiration of the fiends in regard to another victim:

. . . "Better be with the dead
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy.
After life's fitful fever one sleeps well."

This sleeping *well* after death, which depends so much upon the proper use of the present life, is an ambiguous phrase that the spirits *turn to their own account.* That a penalty should follow man's high treason against Heaven's King in deserting to the enemy, cannot be surprising to any instructed Christian. By indulging in spiritistic practises he accepts the implicit or explicit invitation to worship at another shrine than that of the Holy of Holies. The very fact of communing with those impersonating spirits that are not the accredited friends and messengers of God, constitutes an offense that totally eclipses the light of faith. To turn to these invisible agents for aid or guidance, is to abandon God and His providence, and the heavenly hosts of propitious saints and angels. It is to spurn Him in favor of outcast spirits, who in envy and in malice labor in rivalry to win man's homage from his Creator. The Christian knows that the two hostile camps are clearly drawn, and that any traffic with the enemy in darkness or in secret, is a grave act of disloyalty—an insult to the Almighty. The traitor merits the loss of the priceless gift of divine faith, as well as the favor and protecting arm of God's providence. Still effective is the penalty decreed by the "Light of the World," "He who loves the danger shall perish in it."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CHURCH AND SPIRITISM

IN CONSIDERING the relation of the Church to Spiritism, it is necessary to distinguish the latter, as a religious system, from its phenomena. As a religion, teaching false and antichristian doctrines, Spiritism falls under the absolute condemnation of the Church. Its phenomena, however, are not on the same footing. Of these many have been found fraudulent, and others real. The fact that the number of the fraudulent has been proved to be multitudinous, has led many, even Christians, to look upon all spiritistic phenomena as deceptive trickeries. This idea seems likely to be conveyed by a few Catholic authors who, while admitting the possibility of the preternatural in Spiritism, ignore the real phenomena, and dwell wholly and with great emphasis upon the fraudulent. Herein lies a positive danger. Such a notion may lead ill-informed Christians to indulge in spiritistic practises under the delusion that all the phenomena are nothing more than harmless sleight-of-hand performances.

Now, it is a fact, that eminent theologians whose writings have been approved by ecclesiastical authorities, teach consistently that amid innumerable fraudulent phenomena, there are some that are real

and of the preternatural order. They hold, first, that, though the spirits cannot always respond to the summons of the mediums, they may, at least at times, do so according to a just dispensation of Divine Providence. Secondly, they insist upon the fallacy of the conclusion that, because the majority of the phenomena are fraudulent, therefore, all are of the same nature. Such inductive reasoning is as imperfect and erroneous as the inference that no pearls are genuine because very many are artificial imitations. Thirdly, they dwell upon the overpowering mass of evidence gathered from eyewitnesses, Catholic and non-Catholic, in every walk of life, priests, magistrates, professors of universities, and men of learning in the divers fields of science, who, from insistent incredulity, employed every precaution against fraudulent practise, and yielded only to indubitable proofs of facts before them. Fourthly, they emphasize the further fact, that many men of renown and upright character in America, in England, in Germany, in France and Italy, have published in their own names an account of these phenomena, with all the adjuncts of time, place, and persons, so that the historic truth of the facts seems beyond question.

Relying upon such an accumulation of evidence, theologians, says Baraza, a famous Spanish author, dare not deny the existence of certain phenomena which transcend the knowledge and powers of mediums; and since it is clear that such effects of

Spiritism cannot be caused by the souls of the dead, much less by good angels, it follows that the sole cause are evil spirits intent upon man's moral ruin.

Now, this teaching of theologians is, as we shall see, approved by the Church in her several decrees, in which she admits the diabolical nature of certain phenomena and, without deciding upon the verity of this or that particular effect, prohibits the faithful by a general law from taking any part in spiritistic practises.

The hostility of the Church in regard to the anti-christian tenets of Spiritism, is of necessity very radical. We may here recall the two, which are of all the most fundamental, that of God and His Divine Son. The distinguished spiritist, Professor Wallace, admits that Christian theologians have lengthy treatises on God's nature, existence, attributes, dealings with men, and their relations to Him, and also, that after death they shall be with Him, and shall see and know Him. But, says the Professor:

> "In the teachings of spirits, there is not a word of all this. They tell us that they commune with higher intelligences than themselves, but of God they really know no more than we do. They say that above these higher intelligences are others higher and higher in apparently endless gradation, but, as far as they know, no absolute knowledge of the Deity Himself is claimed by any of them."[1]

[1] *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, p. 116.

In regard to Christ the Lord, spiritists, while claiming their cult to be the complement of Christianity, absolutely deny His Divinity, and, by this denial, they would rob the Christian religion of its meaning; for the God-Man is the central fact, the cornerstone of Christianity. Deny His Divinity, and His religion is verily a vanity, a myth, and worse, a mockery. His divinely-instituted Church must therefore hold that any fact, or statement, or phenomenon that contravenes the fundamental truth of Christianity, comes from the nether regions. A fact it cannot be, as a statement it is false, and as a phenomenon it must be sheer imposture. Truth is one and unchangeable as is God Himself. Error is ever multiplex, and ever changing as in Spiritism.

The Church, as the lover of God's truth made known to us by Divine Revelation, must, as its heavenly-commissioned guardian, be intolerant of falsehood no less than a conscientious master is intolerant of his pupil's errors. Hence, against the false teachings of the spirits of Spiritism, which are in contradiction to the supernatural religion as embodied in the one universal Church of Christendom, she must be as steadfast as truth is against error, as adamantine as Heaven is against Hell, and guard her children against its false doctrines as against a foul contagion, ruinous to the souls of men.

If in this unchangeable antagonism she be deemed intolerant, it is only by irreligious men and others

who, tainted by the antichristian spirit of Modernism, continue to parade falsely in the robes of the shepherds of Christ's flock. Such may say with the Anglican Dean Inge: "a profound reconstruction is demanded. The new type of Christianity will be more Christian than the old because it will be more moral." The Dean, we grant, may be oracular in regard to his own Anglican creed, with which he should be well acquainted. But the Christian knows that no man can change God's religion nor improve upon it. Imbued with the spirit of the Most High, the olden Church must go on unchangeable in opposition to ever-changing error.

The unlawfulness of Spiritism does not arise from the mere fact of receiving communications from the dead. Souls of the dead have, in accordance with Divine ordination, been known, in many instances, to return to earth to convey to friends a definite message for some supernatural purpose, either of charity or of justice, and that definite purpose once accomplished, the ghostly visitant departed, without satisfying the eager curiosity of the living concerning other affairs in the spirit-world. This unvarying circumstance is well illustrated in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. He portrays the ghost as speaking only upon the one purpose of his visitation, and maintaining silence, according to Divine *inhibition*, on all other things of the spirit-world:

"But that *I am forbid*
To tell the secrets of my prison house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres.

. . . . . .

But this eternal blazon *must not be*
To ears of flesh and blood."

Verily, eternal truths, divinely hidden concerning the spirit-world, must not be blazoned or published to mortal men. Here, a few preliminary remarks may be opportune. In his present life man is, by God's ordination, to live on our visible material earth, and not in the immaterial spirit-world. All knowledge for his present good, an all-wise Providence has Himself given him by means of His Divine Revelation, and any attempt to gain, by other means, further information of his future life, is an illicit act in contravention to God's supreme will, an encroachment upon His prerogative, and an insult to His Divine Majesty. Hence, the intrinsic malice of Spiritism lies in its open opposition to the virtue of religion. It dishonors the Creator by explicitly attributing to evil spirits what belongs to Him alone. For, since God has ordained that our knowledge of the future life, and of those who have entered upon it, must come from Him, it follows that, to seek it independently of Him, and even contrary to His divine will as expressed in Holy Writ, is a grave act of insubordination, in

which we not only substitute for Him evil spirits, but also offer them divine honor by attributing to them a prerogative proper to the Deity alone. Spiritistic practise is, therefore, an act forbidden by the virtue of religion, as well as by the natural law, from which religion derives its binding force. That law, "inscribed upon the mind of every man that cometh into the world," proclaims that God is the Creator and Sovereign Ruler of the universe, upon whom depend all creatures, whether men or angels, and to whom alone is due supreme homage. It is, therefore, manifest that any spirit, acting otherwise than as a messanger sent by God, acts independently of Him and in disobedience to His divine law. In ancient times communicating spirits, whether of necromancers or of the pythonesses of Apollo, or of soothsayers, or magicians, made no claim to be divine messengers. They were under the influence of pagan gods, who were really demons acting or speaking in the visible form of idols of wood or stone, and arrogating divine honors to themselves. So, too, the spirits of modern Spiritism do not claim to be representatives or messengers of God, but, on the contrary, actually protest, as we have seen, that they know no more about Him than do mortal men.

That spiritistic practises are in violation of the natural law, is confirmed by the declaration of the Lord Himself, in which He denounced it as "an abomination" in His sight, and threatened to destroy

the nations among which it flourished. Now, the positive, or written law was promulgated to the Jews, and not to pagan peoples. The latter, therefore, were ignorant of that law, and had for their guidance solely the natural law, which by the light of reason, is knowable to every man. Their punishment, then, was not for an offense against the written law, of which they knew nothing, but for crimes against the natural law—crimes against right reason, which Divine Justice could not excuse in rational creatures. His is the sole right to send spirits as messengers to men, and the violation of that right, even among pagan nations living under the natural law, He punished in the vindication of His supremacy. But that right is clearly violated in Spiritism, when mediums, like pagan necromancers, evoke spirits, not as messengers of God, nor as channels of His divine power. In fact, the whole process of Spiritism embodies no recognition of the Lord of the universe, but rather ignores Him in favor of creatures or fallen spirits, and this ignoring can but constitute a grave insult to the Divine Majesty, and call as of old for severe punishment.

It matters little that the mediumistic summons can never, as we have seen, reach souls departed, whether in the heaven of bliss, or in the temporary abode of purgation, or in the eternal prison; for it is, nevertheless, caught up by other prowling spirits, vagabond wanderers of the air, who with a permit to try men's

souls are ever bent on fanning into flame the potential wickedness smouldering in the heart of fallen man.

Spiritism is, moreover, proscribed by the written or positive law of God. It violates the first commandment: it ignores the supremacy of God, it rejects His Divine Revelation for the contradictory teachings of invisible spirit-agencies; it encourages the superstitious practise of dealing with spirits, and of seeking knowledge of future things by means other than those ordained of God; and, as a false religion and species of idolatry, it turns men from the Creator to His creatures, whose spirit-guidance withdraws them from the rule of His divine providence. Hence, as seen in Holy Writ, it was condemned by the Lord Himself, as an abominable superstitious practise, and emphatically proscribed under the severest penalties.[2]

Divine Justice always measures the penalty for crime according to its heinousness, and consequently we may safely reason from the severity of the punishment to the magnitude of the offense in the eyes of God. This principle is explicitly exemplified in the case of King Ochozias. In his anxiety to learn the issue of his dangerous illness, he ignored the God of Israel in Elias, His seer and prophet, and sent messengers with gifts to consult Beelzebub, the spirit-oracle at Accaron. For this offense against the

[2] *Lev.* xx—*Deut.* xviii.

law of God, an angel of the Lord commanded Elias to go and pronounce the sentence of death upon the impious King.[3]

We shall not dwell upon the many "controlling spirits," as described in Holy Writ, nor how, to win Our Lord's favor, they were anxious to confess His Divinity. We shall not pause upon the *diablerie* of the Black Art, as practised by Simon Magus in his attempts to counterfeit the miracles of the Apostles. We shall not enlarge upon the persecution incurred by St. Paul for liberating from her thraldom the girl with a "controlling spirit," whom certain men, for the sake of lucre, had employed to give séances like our modern mediums. For we must pass on to the positive teaching of the Church, as voiced by her eminent theologians, by tradition, by Councils, and decrees of the *Holy Office.*

All Catholic moralists have adopted with a remarkable unanimity an uncompromising attitude toward Spiritism, or the evocation of the dead and its phenomena. The latter, when clearly preternatural or beyond explanation by natural causes, they attribute, never to the souls of the dead, but always to evil spirits or fallen angels. That this unanimous opinion is in conformity with the teaching and action of the Church from the early ages, is evidenced in the decrees of the Fourth Council of Carthage, the Fifth

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[3] IV *Kings,* i.

Council of Constantinople, the Second of Tours, and several others. During the Middle Ages there was little call for action; Christendom was one in Faith and Morals. Then, peoples, as if by an instinct of divine faith, recognized the obvious falsity of any theory that the souls of the dead could be evoked at the will of a medium. Then, all believed in the existence of evil spirits, or devils, and their wicked designs upon men, and firmly held that the spirits of necromancy were demons who impersonated souls departed. In cases of obsession or possession, the faithful naturally looked for aid to Holy Church, which had from the earliest days a prescribed ritual for the exorcism of evil spirits. They knew that Our Lord had given to His Apostles and their successors His own Divine power over demons.[4] That this exorcising power was regularly employed by the Church, as occasions arose, is recorded by writers of the second and third centuries. St. Justin Martyr, Origen, and Tertullian, we read, were accustomed to appeal to the power of the Church over demons as a strong argument for her divine origin.

But the disruption of the unity of Faith and Morals of Christendom by the religious revolution of the sixteenth century, brought in its train many evils. Of these, the worst of our day is a rampant materialism, which, amid the growing prevalence of unbelief,

[4] *Luke*, ix.

blazes a path for Spiritism. The Church, in 1856, deemed it necessary to warn the faithful of the unlawfulness of Spiritism and its practises. In a decree of the *Holy Office*, she urged Bishops "to take every possible means to repress and uproot all abuses, that so the flock of Christ may be protected against the enemy, the 'Deposit of Faith' safeguarded, and the faithful preserved from moral corruption." Ballerini, in commenting on this decree, writes as follows:

> "It is clear by the light of faith [*fide constat*] that God forbids the evoking of the spirits of the dead by man, and does not allow any intercourse to be carried on with them, so that any summoning of them is not only unlawful, but altogether fruitless of results. To such summons human souls answer not, nor any good angel, but Satan and his angels. Spiritsm is, therefore, an intercourse with evil spirits, to whom men deliver themselves up to be taught and guided, and by whom, as events prove, they are led away from the true faith and hurried into heresy and infidelity."[5]

Of special interest is the following declaration of the Second Plenary Council held at Baltimore in 1866, because it deals particularly with spiritistic conditions in America:

> "It seems a well-established fact that many of the wonderful phenomena which are said to be

[5] Ballerini's Edition of Bussenbaum, II, p. 520.

> produced at spiritistic circles, are either altogether fictitious, or are produced by a fraudulent conspiracy among the "performers," or are to be attributed to the imagination of persons called mediums, or to the credulity of the spectators, or, finally, are to be ascribed to a certain sleight-of-hand, such as magicians practise. However, it seems hardly to be doubted that certain things, at least, are due to Satan's intervention, since they can scarcely in any other way be satisfactorily explained."

After making due allowance for fraudulent practises, and declaring that some at least of the manifestations are to be ascribed to the intervention of evil spirits, the Council proceeds to warn the faithful against lending any support to Spiritism or attending séances, even out of curiosity.[6] It further points out in particular the antichristian character of spiritistic teachings concerning religion, and designates them as attempts to revive paganism and magic.

Still later, the Church, on March 30, 1898, in reply to certain queries, declared through the *Holy Office* that the practise of Spiritism, either as medium or inquirer, must under every circumstance be condemned as gravely illicit. Again, on April 24, 1917, in reply to doubts expressed by Catholics in regard to the licitness of their *passive* presence at séances, the same *Holy Office* condemned even such passive assistance. It expressly declared that no Catholic is

[6] Decreta NN., 33-41.

allowed to take part in any spiritistic communication or manifestation even of an unfraudulent and reverential nature, either by interrogating the invisible agents, or by listening to their answers, or as a simple spectator, even though he tacitly or expressly protests that he wishes to have nothing to do with the malign spirit. Hence, under no circumstance is a Catholic allowed either actively or passively to attend a spiritistic séance.

As our purpose in the present work is to give, not our personal views, nor the idiosyncratic views of this or that author, but rather the view common to leading Catholic minds as based on the teachings of the Church, we shall, we think, best attain it by giving in summary the current Catholic doctrine on Spiritism, as expressed with notable unanimity in treatises on Moral Theology in universal use. Our representative will be Father *Lehmkuhl*, whose high standing as an international Catholic authority on moral questions, lends weight to his words:

> "In Spiritism we have plainly nothing but a detestable form of superstition, for Spiritism is an art, whether real or pretended, of calling up the dead and of communicating with them or obtaining answers from them.
>
> "It is not, however, to be supposed that this intercourse or conversation takes place with the dead themselves, but except in the case when the manifestations are merely due to trickery and sleight-of-hand, the apparitions of dead persons

and the communications made are really due to the devil. For utterances which are so trivial and not infrequently directed against the true faith and against Christian piety, cannot proceed from God or from any good spirit or from the blessed in heaven. Hence we can only attribute them to evil and damned spirits, and since the souls of men that are lost neither of their own power nor by permission of Divine Providence can, ordinarily speaking, hold intercourse with persons still living on earth, no alternative remains but to assign them to a diabolical agency.

"Such communications can only, as a rule, take place through a so-called 'medium.' These mediums, while the spirit is communicating or purporting to communicate, are kept in a state of hypnotic trance induced by their spiritistic employer. There can be no question that a very great deal that happens in these séances is due to fraud or trickery on the part either of the medium or the responsible person in charge, but good evidence also exists that manifestations occur which can only be explained by the intervention of forces which transcend what is natural to man; that is to say, by diabolical agency.

"Excessive incredulity is as unreasonable as excessive credulity, and it would be undesirable that by treating such things as mere delusions and old wives' tales the sin of Spiritism should be held in less horror. In any case, even if the manifestations are fraudulent, those who come there to evoke and get answers from the dead incur specifically the same kind of guilt as if

actually they did hold communication with the devil.

"Neither is the sinful nature of such practises altered by the pretense that only communication with good spirits is desired. For this is a mere pretext, since good spirits do not perform ridiculous tricks or condescend to gratify mere curiosity."[7]

Theologians see the restraining hand of God upon the spirits of Spiritism. Notwithstanding their loss of all things supernatural, these outcasts of heaven, though fallen, retain the great powers proper to their natural existence, as is evidenced in their ability to act upon matter, and in their magnificent intellect far transcending man's, which affords them a knowledge of the physical laws of nature, and an insight into human activities of sense, imagination, and mind, all enriched by an accumulated experience of ages, yet their activities are manifestly curtailed and crippled in a most humiliating manner. "How have the mighty fallen!" These proud spirits, who aspired to equal God, are now confirmed in their sinful state of revolt. Impelled by the malignity of their purpose they accept the abject condition of slavery in a dependence upon cataleptic mediums and to gibber as ghosts in the darkness of séances. In their practises of fraud and deception, they are always doomed to a mode of action which can deceive only those who are will-

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[7] *Theologia Moralis* (Editio Duodecima), Spiritismus, I, p. 284.

ing to be deceived. Compelled, from a blasted moral nature, to make falsehood their truth, they must, as absolute subjects of their King, the "Father of Lies," clothe their revelations in a garb of falsities and contradictions.

What Christian, illumined by the lustrous beams of his heavenly Father's revelations, can, in his gift of faith, be blind to the absurd methods and false teachings of these imps of darkness? When he reflects upon the ineffable glory and majesty of the Almighty, as revealed in our wondrous universe, and His method of speaking to man through His luminous angels and saintly prophets, and, above all, in His only Son, Christ the Lord, whose resplendent Divinity blinded men on Thabor, and whose beauteous deified body brought joy to His distracted disciples, he will perceive all to be in conformity with his exalted ideas of a God of infinite wisdom, and power, and majesty. When, however, in contrast to all this, he turns to the invisible agents of Spiritism, to the ghosts jabbering through unconscious mediums, playing tricks and other odd things so unbecoming in the eyes of Christians, how, in amazement at the blind folly of spiritists, can he help exclaiming, "What fools these mortals be?"

Again, what attractions can a Christian find in the teaching of those masquerading spirits? Of course, as fallen angels or demons, they can know nothing of the supernatural heaven in which they never were

—a heaven of glorious angels and beatified saints in celestial bliss. They give no moral code to regulate man's life, nor promise of a future resurrection, but seek to drag him down to the merely natural, on a plane with the brute creation, and send his soul to "the beyond" to live in a paradise scarcely better than our earth, where are houses, and streets, and parks, and lakes, and forests, and animals; where disembodied souls smoke, drink, play golf, tennis, and other games they loved in mortal life, each spirit suiting his promised heaven to the liking of his client. All these spiritistic fictions are to the Christian such monstrous absurdities as to be believed solely by those who are not only ignorant of our future life as disclosed by Divine Revelation, but also of the absolutely spiritual nature of the human soul, which makes such dreams utterly impossible of realization. A Christian knows that the soul, on leaving this world and its body, also leaves behind all likes and interests of its earthly life, and enters a spirit-realm where all things are, as itself, purely spiritual and absolutely immaterial.

If in our materialistic age, which ignores the spiritual, and glories solely in the material, these fundamental truths are unknown to multitudes who dwell in Egyptian darkness, they are, nevertheless, clear to Christians who worship the "Light of the World" enthroned upon the altars of Christendom. In Him they have spiritual life, and light, and peace,

and a safeguard against the wiles of man's arch-enemy and his fellow-legionaries. They spurn the Black Arts, spurn Spiritism and its wily invisible agents, with their fictions of impossible realizations. Loving truth rather than falsehood, the Christian adheres to realities as vouched for by God Himself—adheres to a supernatural heaven in which reigns his loving Father, who created him to dwell with Himself in His eternal home, where, deified in soul and glorified in body, after the pattern of the risen Christ, he will live a brighter and supernatural existence with angels and saints in celestial bliss forever. The truths of an infallible God and loving Father, suffice to guide him in the present life of pilgrimage, and to guard him against the impossible and fraudulent dreams of wily spirits. Hence, safe under His divine tutelage, he will steadfastly adhere to his baptismal vows to renounce Satan with all his works and pomps.

APPENDIX

ECTOPLASMIC THEORY

In treating in previous pages of examples of materializations which are usually considered real and genuine, nothing was said of the method or process employed, because it still seems a mooted question. When Dr. Geley of Paris approved the theory of ectoplasm in his recent work *From the Unconscious to the Conscious*, he concentrated upon himself a great storm in the scientific world. Since then, have come to his aid Dr. von Schrenck-Nötzing, Dr. Richet and Dr. Crawford. The theory, while greedily accepted by spiritists, who for long had been looking for some method in explanation of the phenomenon, was, on the other hand, received with incredulity and even ridicule by many scientific experimenters.

As a specific term, materialization is employed by Spiritists to signify the formation, through mediumistic powers, of an ephemeral apparition, or ghost in a bodily form, visible to the senses, and sometimes palpable and capable of being photographed. Of the non-fraudulent materializations recorded, the most apparently authentic is that of "Katie King," as found in the report of the numerous experiments of Sir William Crookes with the medium, Florence Cook. After carefully weighing the evidence advanced,

Father Thurston in an able paper in the *Month*[1] came to the conclusion, as we have seen,[2] that of the four possible suppositions, the one, which is least in conflict with the evidence available, is that "Katie King" was, as she purported to be, a materialized spirit-form.

Upon this ectoplasmic theory, now ardently defended by spiritists, and vigorously denied by others, we deem it only proper to present the strongest arguments for and against it, and allow the reader to form his own opinion. But before doing so, we wish to premise—what shall be shown later—that according to Catholic theologians, spirits, if permitted to materialize their invisible presence, do not absolutely need the ectoplasm in question.

To a Catholic there can perhaps be no weightier authority in support of the ectoplasmic theory than Mr. J. G. Raupert, K.S.G. As a former associate of the famous British Society for Psychical Research, he had intimate relations with spiritistic practises, and devoted much time to their study, and, since his conversion to the Faith, has with even more zeal continued his studies on the subject, and given us the results in his numerous spiritistic publications. Speaking of his own conclusions based on personal experiments, he writes in a recent work (1919) as follows:

"I was convinced that the spirits, in order to

[1] March, 1923.
[2] Chapter IX.

produce perceptible manifestations in the sense-world, withdrew from the physical organism of the medium some kind of vital force or matter. In dark séances I have observed this subtle matter issuing from the body of the sensitive, and I have found traces of it in my earliest photographs . . . Science has now been compelled, not merely to admit the fact itself, but to put it on a true scientific basis. Experiments carried on in private laboratories and under strict test conditions and with the aid of photography and of scientific instruments, have established the existence of this force or fluid or matter beyond all possibility of doubt and have shown clearly what the method is by which these spirits act and how they manage to produce such astounding phenomena."[3]

In support of these strong and catagorical affirmations, we append in sketches, necessarily very brief, the evidence found in the experiments of several noted scientists. The strongest, say spiritists, is that which Dr. Crawford offers in the sixty-three séances held at Belfast during the years 1915 and 1916. They were always private and limited to the seven members of the Goligher family, all of whom and especially Katherine, the youngest daughter, possessed mediumistic powers.

The spirits in control were obedient, says the Doctor, to every command, now elevating the table, now lowering it slowly or with a crash, as he ordered.

[3] *New Black Magic*, p. 64.

In no experiment was he allowed to get in front of the medium or between her and the levitated table. When a strong light was flashed upon the top of the table, it did not interfere with the levitation, but the same light flashed underneath it, caused it to drop at once. The increase of the medium's weight during the levitation and her return to normal after the lowering of the table, was in every instance equal to the weight of the table. In the production of raps, there was also a change in the weight of the medium, which was in proportion to their loudness. At a sledge-hammer blow, the scales registered a loss of twenty pounds. These changes were not effected suddenly, but gradually. They represent the actual matter temporarily withdrawn from the medium and used in the production of the phenomena.

The ectoplasm which the spirit-operators subtract from the body of the medium and shape into leverages or "rapping rods," as the Professor calls them for want of a better name, is afterward restored to her organism. Frequently when he placed his hand under the plane of the levitated table, he felt the presence of actual matter, whose touch gave him a cold, clammy, oily sensation, as though the air under the table was mixed with particles of a dead and disagreeable substance. It had a distinctly reptilian feeling. In his experiments Dr. von Schrenck-Nötzing had the same sensation. He found the plastic substance cold and viscous, as though a small reptile

were lying in his hand. This mysterious plasm, of which we have no conception, is difficult to describe, for it is invisible because practically transparent. Professor Crawford often felt this plasm moving outward from the body of the medium, as actual matter taken from her body with a consequent loss of weight, and restored at the end of the trance. He felt the same substance near the ankles of the medium whenever the rappings took place near her feet. Any interference with this plasm stops the phenomenon, and so annoys the spirit-operators as to cause them to protest in quick violent raps.

Particles of this cold clammy matter forms the cantilever, which, having its fixed end in the body of the medium, moves outward from her, and is capable of twisting, squirming, and moving about with purposeful motions, as though it were alive and conscious. It seems, says the Professor, to consist of a bundle of very fine closely-connected threads, which, thrown out from various parts of the medium's body, like physical semi-flexible rods, are controlled in action by the spirit-operators from within her body.

On more than one occasion when electric instruments, in use for test purpose, came in contact with the plasm between the knees of the medium and the table, the latter fell with a sudden crash to the floor—a proof that the plasm projecting from the body of the medium downward below the table, had, like a physical arm taken an adhesive grip on the under

side, and moved it up or down, or in any direction within the circle. In this instance the Professor's interference was, as usual, reprehended by a sudden bombardment of vociferous spirit raps.

The end of these semi-flexible rods, when struck on the floor or other objects, cause the sharp sounds known as raps. The plasm has apparently all the characteristics of solid bodies, is more or less flexible, and can in the form of projecting rods vary in diameter and in length to five feet or less within the circle. Each of these flexible rods exhibits at its end a greater or less rigidity, which varies in light and darkness. In the latter the raps are sharp and distinct, in the former, dull thuds, for the plasmic rods cannot be made stiff while a strong light is playing upon them. In all probability, says the Professor, they are of a complicated chemical structure proper to the nervous elements of the body, and under the action of strong light, suffer a molecular breakdown. Such are the facts as vouched for by Professor Crawford, as well as his reasonings upon them.

His position in regard to the exudation of plasmic matter, has for some years past been sustained by a like phenomenon in the case of other mediums. Accounts of these with numerous photographs are given in Dr. von Schrenck-Nötzing's book, *The Phenomena of Materializations*, and in Dr. Geley's *From the Unconscious to the Conscious*, and in Professor Richet's recent *Traité de Metapsychique*. Their Medium Eva

Carriere, is identical with Marthe Beraud, whose experiments at the Villa Carmen in Algiers have been regarded with much suspicion.

But anyone who reads Professor Richet's recent work will find it no easy task to discredit his very plain narrative, nor will he discover any conclusive evidence to support the rumors of imposture, which, as might be anticipated in such a case, were freely circulated and eagerly accepted by sceptics at the time. In fact, according to this distinguished scientist, the materializations at the Villa Carmen were relatively very complete.

Eva Carriere, on migrating to Paris, was adopted by Madame Bisson, under whose patronage she began to exhibit her mediumistic powers. Dr. von Schrenck-Nötzing and Dr. Geley, particularly, have studied her materializations under scientific tests. They perceived a plasmic substance exuding or materializing from various parts of Eva's body. It has been seen, touched, and photographed. Even motion pictures have been taken of the entire process. A microscopic analysis of a portion of the substance which remained behind, showed a curious hotchpotch of apparently living matter, thrown together helter-skelter, and more or less resembling a tumor-growth, in its peculiarities.

This living substance which issued visibly from the medium's body, affirm these two experimenters, is seen to take shape and rapidly form itself into hands, faces, and bits of bodies that last a few moments in

vivid lifelike reality, and then instantly vanish back into the medium's body. These hands have been touched, and the faces, it is said, are extremely lifelike.[4]

Madame Bisson was always present at Eva's séances and the accounts of the wondrous phenomena which she circulated were taken up by spiritists, widely heralded in Parisian papers, and quoted and even enlarged upon in the English and American press. As the stories seemed to have for sponsors one or more professors of the Sorbonne, *L'Opinion*, a French weekly review, demanded that the University, in defense of its honor, submit the reports to a scientific investigation.

The sensational nature of the affair gave it an universal interest, and led to a wide discussion. M. Paul Heuze, especially, wrote copious articles which appeared simultaneously in *L'Opinion* of Paris and in the *Daily Telegraph* of London. From the latter's account of the Sorbonne's investigation of the claims of Madame Bisson and her client-medium, we cull the following leading points:

> "*L'Opinion*, the well-known French weekly, publishes today (July 9, 1922) the results of a series of spiritualistic experiments which had been conducted at intervals during the last three months by professors of the Sorbonne. The scientists chosen were Dr. Lapique, director of the

[4] Vid. Dr. H. Carrington in *Scientific American*, June, 1922.

Laboratory of General Physiology; Dr. Georges Dumas, professor of Experimental and Pathological Psychology; Dr. Henri Pieron, director of the Laboratory of Physiological Psychology; Dr. Henri Laugier, director of the Laboratory of General Physiology of the Faculty of Science. The object was to test the reality of a certain substance which was said to exude from different parts of the medium's body, the mouth, the finger tips, the shoulders, and the back of the neck, and to assume of its own accord a protean variety of shapes and aspects.

"The experiments, *L'Opinion* states, were conducted with the strictest scientific accuracy. The professors were warned that any sudden light would probably hinder the manifestation of the mysterious substance, and that touching it would cause serious injury or even death to the medium. The warning was not necessary, because after fifteen patient experiments in the course of which the medium repeatedly declared: 'It's coming, it's coming! Can't you see it, next my left shoulder?' The only result visible to the eyes of the professors were a few salivary deposits and two momentary expulsions from the mouth of the medium of a sticky, greyish substance, resembling a thin layer of indiarubber which she almost immediately swallowed. The professors were forced to the conclusion that as far as the medium was concerned, an attempt had been made to perpetrate upon them a somewhat clumsy hoax."[5]

More details are supplied by M. Massiani, the

[5] Apud *Month*, Oct., 1922, p. 331.

Paris correspondent of the American Catholic press. He writes:

> "The fifteen séances were held in the Laboratory of Physiology of the Faculty of Science, where a room had been prepared according to Madame Bisson's description. The official report of the Sorbonne, just now made public, states that the substance issuing from the mouth and later swallowed had the form of a thin disk about six centimeters wide and three centimeters long. In the first manifestation the medium leaned over and touched the wrist of Professor Dumas with the substance which, he said, gave the impression of a viscuous matter tepid and inert."

The verdict of the four experts is very clear. They say: "As regards the existence of an ectoplasm, our experiments have led to results which can only be considered as entirely negative." In the following year, as reported in the *Month*, April, 1923, Eva C. gave sittings in London before the representatives for the Society for Psychical Research, who, without *parti pris* of any kind, presided over the séances with Eva C. in London, and in spite of their rather barren results, find much to say in favor of the reality of her phenomena. They state, for example, that:

> "1. There is no proof whatever that the medium possesses the power of regurgitation or has any acquaintance with deceptive methods or contrivances.
>
> "2. The materializations are clearly often not

made of paper, chiffon or any other similar substance. This is evident from photographic enlargements, besides being excluded by the fact that they change their shape while under direct observation.

"3. The medium has never been detected in the preparation or secretion of any article likely to be of any service to the séances.

"4. If Mme. Bisson and Dr. Von Schrenck can be accepted as even moderately good observers, no amount of fraud could explain certain phenomena that, they say, they have observed.

"5. Comparative studies show that Eva C. is not the only medium producing these manifestations. Accounts of the phenomena with other mediums are remarkably similar to those occurring with her."

From Eva C. we turn to a critical review of the supernormal phenomena of the Goligher circle as reported by Dr. Crawford. Convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena and his explanation of them, he has made out in his book, *The Phenomena of Spiritism,* a strong *prima facie* case in favor of the theory of ectoplasm. This book, which has met with a very wide circulation, is considered by spiritists to be the last word on the subject.

But soon after Dr. Crawford's self-inflicted death on July 30, 1920, his literary executors requested E. E. Fournier D'Albe, a well-known physicist and believer in the preternatural, to undertake a further series of researches with the Goligher circle, pre-

serving, as far as possible, the same conditions and forms previously employed. Dr. D'Albe held twenty sittings from May to August, 1921, at which the principal medium was Katherine Goligher. The whole family, all possessing mediumistic powers, always formed the circle, and took an active part in the sittings, a fact which, the Doctor says, impeded him much in his researches. Before we quote a few points from the published record of Dr. D'Albe's proceedings,[6] it is but fair to note that his report did not win favor with many inquirers who are normally quite sceptical in matters of Spiritism, as may be seen in Mr. Dingwell's critical essay in the S. P. R. journal. In fact, the Doctor's adverse report is not accepted as final. It is now known that, from the first, he was much prejudiced against the Golighers, and firmly believed them to act fraudulently. His feelings were ill-concealed, and the circle in turn became prejudiced against him, and, as the sittings proceeded, they disclosed, not only a suspicious spirit of tolerance, but even a growing dislike for him. Such conditions have always been found to be disastrous to the success of a séance. Success demands an harmonious relation of thoughts and feelings among all the sitters.

We have selected from Dr. D'Albe's report certain salient parts as follows:

[6] *The Coligher Circle*, May to August, 1921—Experiences of E. E. Fournier D'Albe, Dr. Sc.

"The illumination was not sufficient to show anything below the table top, and I therefore could not judge the evidential character of these performances." [p. 9]

"The photo of the ectoplasm gives a strong suggestion of chiffon or other textile material. Observing that the structure was very active, I entered the circle and asked that it might touch my hand. After repeated requests, it flicked my hand several times, the last time (by request) rather harder. The contact resembled that of dry human skin, as of a large thumb or big toe." [p. 28]

"At the thirteenth sitting I asked for a levitation of the stool, and on stooping down I saw against the dim red background of the wall the stool held by the medium's foot and a portion of her leg. Having attached a locator to the stool, I again saw the procedure, but the stool was abruptly dropped and the foot withdrawn. The leg was quite straight, swinging from the hip-joint and her body seemed immovable." [p. 34]

"With a flashlight I clearly saw the ectoplasmic structure as an object resembling a piece of white muslin or chiffon about the size of a man's handkerchief, and caught between the medium's feet and pulled out in front of her." [p. 37]

"I made no headway toward my objective," says the Doctor, "which was to confirm Dr. Crawford's results. The phenomena were plentiful, but results were inconclusive." The shadow-photo of the ectoplasm which he took on June 13th, again showed a

clearly-marked chiffon texture, and, on making numerous attempts to discover some difference between this texture and that of well-known loom products, he could find none. When he attempted to take more shadow-photographs, his attempts were resisted by the "operators." His purpose of calling in the aid of expert psychical researchers, was opposed by the circle. At the final sitting, which was held under strict test conditions, there were no phenomena. Dr. d'Albe decided to discontinue the sittings, and so notified Miss Goligher by letter."

Dr. d'Albe makes the following comments upon his experiments:

> "1. Scientific researches usually employ isolated mediums, but Dr. Crawford sat with the medium and the whole family, who assured him it enhanced the power of the phenomena. In fact, he found that levitations and larger phenomena were only obtained when the circle included the members of the family. It is obviously more difficult to control a whole family than one single medium. To make the result evidential it is necessary to exclude the cooperation of every member of the family. For the sake of harmony Dr. Crawford was reluctant to change the established family custom of composing the circle.
>
> "2. The medium sat in comparative darkness and only the upper half of the sitters were visible, their legs and the floor being in complete darkness.
>
> "3. The practise of singing hymns drowned

the noise of any mechanical preparation by the sitters.

"4. The joining of hands enabled the circle to transmit messages to each other preparatory to cooperation.

"5. The circle sat in a fixed order seldom varied, and relatives or intimate friends always held the hands of the medium on either side.

"6. The rigid rule against breaking the circle rendered the mechanical manipulations and apparatus safe from interference by the investigator, who was always outside of the circle.

"7. The circle never did anything to which the 'operators' objected. They, and not the investigator, controlled the sittings and experiments. The investigator had always to consult the 'operators' before trying any new experiment. If any experiment was tried and failed, a shower of raps indicated a demand for total darkness, or a black cloth over medium or black stockings, always something which made experiments less evidential. Often there was a postponement of the experiment to the next sitting, which allowed time to make preparations to meet the call.

"8. If you insisted on conducting your own experiments in your own way, the phenomena ceased altogether and a hint was given that there would be no more sittings.

"9. No one was allowed admittance who was not fully vouched for by some member of the circle, a fact which prevented any attempts to expose the Goligher circle either by flashing an unexpected light or by seizing the psychic structure.

"10. Dr. Crawford was completely satisfied as to the good faith of the medium and the sitters, and long working in this atmosphere of complete confidence, he acquired a habit of thought which made him impervious even to fairly obvious evidence of artifice." [p. 48]

Dr. d'Albe gives his final conclusions as follows:

"After a careful study of Dr. Crawford's books and investigations under the same conditions, I am satisfied that all the phenomena I witnessed myself were produced by *normal physical means.* I do not doubt his integrity and conscientiousness in observing or recording the phenomena. But he failed *in my opinion* to make sufficient allowance for the possibility of cooperation and practise on the part of the medium and the circle, especially the latter, and when preternatural claims are made even unconscious fraud must be allowed for. I cannot specify a single result of Dr. Crawford's which I could regard as definitely evidential."[7]

For the reasons previously stated, the above report of Dr. d'Albe has not been accepted by many inquirers who are normally quite sceptical. Much impressed by certain later experiments made by Dr. Crawford, and recorded by him in his posthumous work *The Psychical Structures at the Goligher Circle*, they await a more satisfactory examination of his experiments than that made by Dr. d'Albe. From

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

these considerations in favor of and against the theory of ectoplasm, we pause for a few reflections.

Though certain scientific experts maintain that materializations usual to common séances are arrant frauds, nevertheless they are also convinced that the real article is had on rare and exceptional occasions when the medium has acquired highly-developed psychic powers. But even with such psychics, says Father Thurston,[8] it is quite intelligible that their activity in the production of genuine phenomena, may be inhibited by an atmosphere of obstinate scepticism in the observers, and by certain forms of psychical restraint. The medium's nervous tension, even when entranced, is likely to be an important factor in the conditions which govern such manifestations. The most astounding phenomena seem undoubtedly to be obtained only when complete confidence and familiarity exist between the medium and the observers. In fact, the collective experience of the Society for Psychical Research, appears to point to the conclusion that the presence of unfamiliar and unsympathetic observers interferes with the production of phenomena, not, indeed, because such strangers are more critical than the habitués, but because they seemingly introduce new conditions, which are disturbing or at least distracting for the medium.[9] So long, says Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J., as we are ignorant

[8] *Month*, Oct., 1922, p. 333.
[9] *Month*, Feb., 1923, p. 103.

of the subjective conditions under which these invisible agencies work, we should give more attention to the effects produced and their real nature, than to the producing causes.

The most powerful psychics, when at times their "spirit-controls" fail to respond, find themselves without the expected mediumistic powers, and, to save their reputation and their clients from disappointment, resort to artificial devices. Such was the case with Eusapia Palladino, the most famous of modern mediums. Her scientific investigators sometimes allowed her full freedom, in order to detect her cheats, but they did not, on that account, deny the reality of her other marvelous phenomena when performed under strict test conditions.

The discussion concerning ectoplasm must be charged to the spiritists themselves. The solution lies in the one positive proof, which is always at hand. Let the sceptic assure himself of the reality by seizing the ectoplasmic form or phantom, or, failing in this, let him at least, amid the darkness required for materialization, throw a flash-light upon the ghost. But if he seek such proofs, he is halted by a rigorous prohibition, which is based on the obvious fiction that such interference with the phantom would endanger the life of the medium—an obvious fiction, we say, because spiritists themselves claim to have handled the ectoplasm, and yet no deleterious effect upon the medium was known to follow.

The theory of ectoplasm, though welcomed and vigorously defended by spiritists, because they deem it the only means of explaining their materializations, bears for the Christian an aspect wholly different. For him ectoplasm is not absolutely necessary. If real, it certainly is unnatural and beyond the powers of any medium. As an effect preternatural, it must be ascribed to the action of the spirit in control of the psychic, and since such a spirit cannot be, as we have seen, a human soul departed, it can only be a fallen angel, who has natural power over material things.

Needless to repeat what we have already seen in the teaching of St. Thomas and theologians in general, concerning the natural powers of fallen angels or demons. Suffice it to recall the salient fact that though these outcast spirits of heaven lost in their fall all supernatural gifts, they retain the powers innate to their natural existence, and of these the most pertinent to our topic is their power to operate on matter, to transfer it from place to place, to assume human forms, and to act on man.[10] These truths considered, there is nothing against the intrinsic possibility of fallen angels or demons abstracting some portion of the medium's material substance and constructing therewith those lifelike forms which exhibit the characteristics of the human body of some

[10] St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, P. I, Q. LI, CX, CXI.

soul departed. That delicate organic matter is, no doubt, better adapted for the purpose of giving the appearance of life and motion to these phantom forms than any other substance known to us.

Irrespective, therefore, of the question whether ectoplasm be real or fictitious, a Christian need not, as we said, hold it absolutely necessary for the purpose of materialization on the part of invisible spirit-agencies, since they can borrow the material required from a lower nature either animate or inanimate. A good illustration is the angel Raphael's assumption of the human form of a young man, and his long sojourn and familiar association with Tobias.

If, then, in conclusion, a Christian holds as possible or even probable the view that in certain rare spiritistic materializations, which appear to be genuine, the psychic supplies the substance needed for the manipulation and construction of sensible human forms, he also holds that such an assumption is not really necessary to explain the phenomenon; since it can be accounted for by the fallen spirit's use of such elements as abound in nature, and are perfectly known to his superior intelligence. But, again, be it known that these spirits, who in nature, in intellect, and in the powers of action far transcend the human, are ordinarily restrained in their activities by Divine Providence. Nevertheless, they may be allowed to exercise those powers, in penalty, in certain circumstances, and under unusual conditions, when, for ex-

ample, a psychic, in rebellion against the law of God, voluntarily disposes himself for invasion, and, in trance actually summons the spirit-demon, known as the "control," to take possession of his body and its faculties, and to use them as his own. What example more familiar than Lady Macbeth's invocation of those "spirits that tend on mortal thoughts," those "silent substances that wait on nature's mischief," and their fateful compliance with her impious appeals?

Spirit-activity has been recorded in many real obsessions and possessions. What was once possible is still possible under the same conditions. Materialization was practised by Pharaoh's magicians against the wonders of Moses. It was in practise among the American aborigines, as recorded by missionaries in the Jesuit Relations. Miss Hardinge, herself a spiritist and the historian of the cult from its inception, admits that the practises of spiritism among the medicine-men of the Indians differed only accidentally from those of the mediums of modern Spiritism. Materializations are also recorded by travelers and missionaries as still occurring among pagan races in Oriental regions, where the spiritual influence of Christianity has not yet penetrated, and we see no reason against its possible existence among modern non-Christians who, in blindly rejecting the doctrines of a divinely-revealed religion, are governed in thought and conduct by the blighting principles of

a demoralizing paganism. But possibility is one thing, and actuality quite another. When the latter is claimed by spiritists, we look for proofs that will place the claim beyond all doubt or cavil. As long as that is wanting, we are justified in giving but a conditional adhesion to the theory of ectoplasm. Observations thus far available, are too uncertain, too extraordinary, too far removed from normal experience and too much disputed, to supply grounds for forming a confidently fixed judgment.

Shall we consider the recrudescence of Spiritism as one of the many evils patent to every observant mind, which an all-ruling Providence allows to be inflicted upon our modern, unbelieving world, gone mad in a rank materialism that rules governments and peoples? When consciences are dead to spiritual things, to religion, and to the idea of a God or Creator; when multitudes have come to shut out all thought of a hereafter, and to live as evoluted animals, making lowly earth their sole heaven, Spiritism may at least awaken such, from the slough of materialism to the reality of the soul's spirituality and its survival in a future life. Thus the powers of darkness, that, in the activities of Spiritism, are intent on evil, may, contrary to their purpose, awaken many who are without the pale and beyond the reach of Christianity, to reflect upon the sane, important, and all-transcending question of the whence, the why, and the whither of their transient terrestrial existence,

and, thus aroused, to turn for light to the one and only Religion divinely appointed for their unerring guidance by the "Light of the World."

In conclusion: the burden of the present work has been to show that from a vast accumulation of trustworthy evidence two deductions follow: first, that innumerable phenomena of Spiritism are manifestly fraudulent; and second, that, nevertheless, there appear, now and then, certain effects which, transcending the natural, call for preternatural agencies, and these when genuine are to be ascribed, not to the angels of heaven, nor to souls departed, but to fallen angels known as demons.

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